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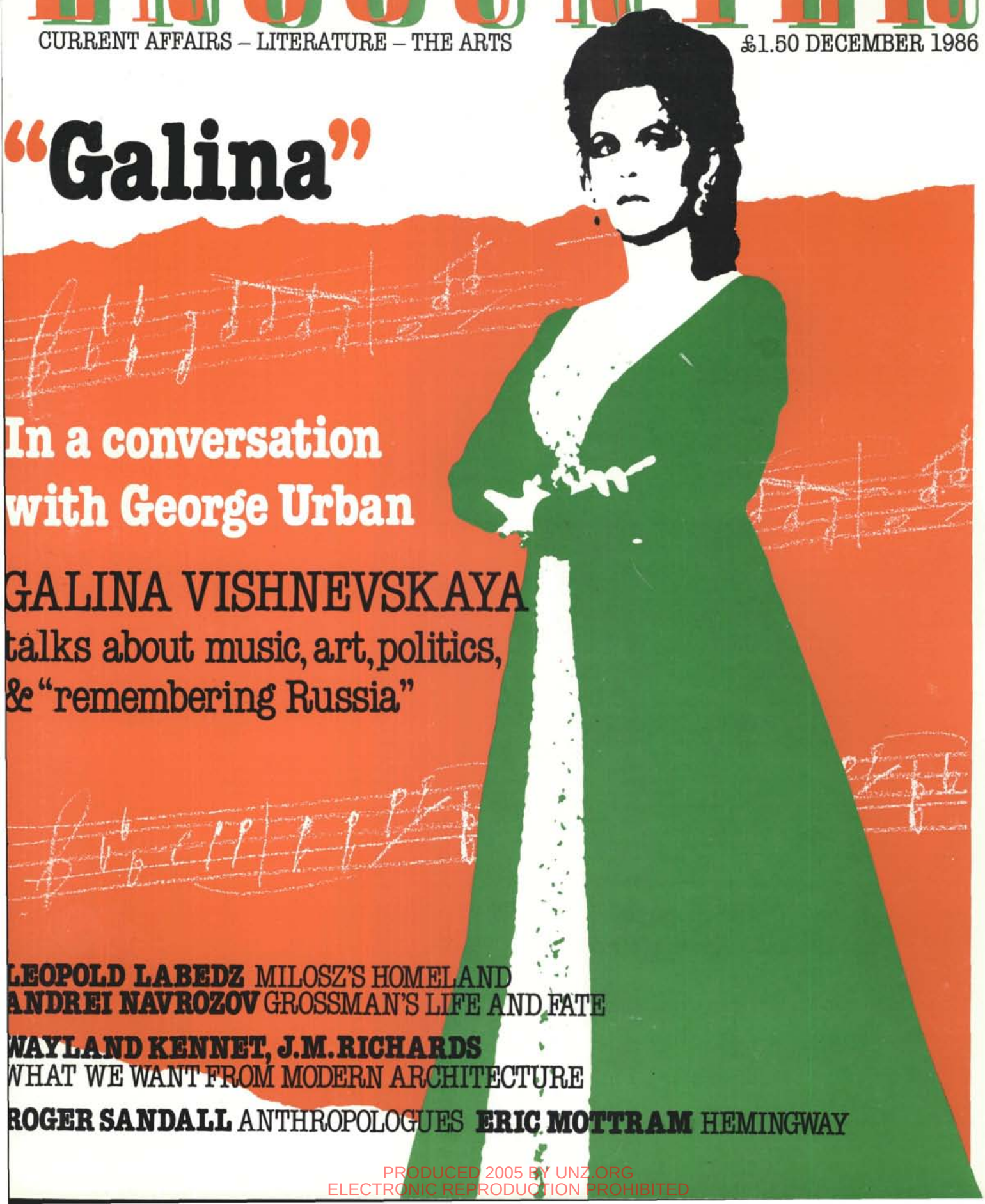

# "Galina"

## In a conversation with George Urban

GALINA VISHNEVSKAYA talks about music, art, politics, & "remembering Russia"

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# "If there was anything good about South Africa, we'd see it on the screen. After all, this is a free country. Isn't it?"

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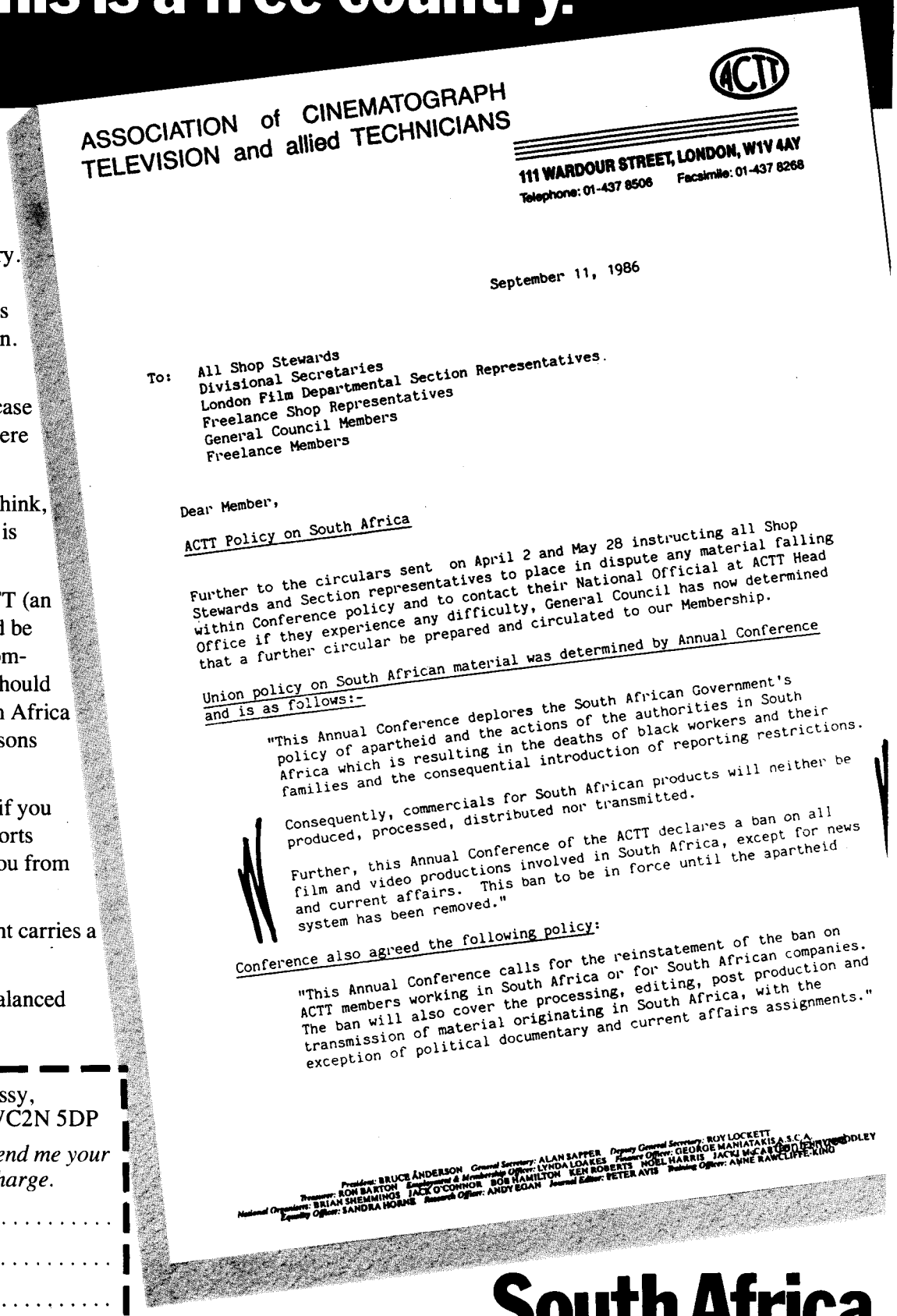

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ACTT

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September 11, 1986

To: All Shop Stewards
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Freelance Shop Representatives
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Dear Member,

ACTT Policy on South Africa

Further to the circulars sent on April 2 and May 28 instructing all Shop Stewards and Section representatives to place in dispute any material falling within Conference policy and to contact their National Official at ACTT Head Office if they experience any difficulty, General Council has now determined that a further circular be prepared and circulated to our Membership.

Union policy on South African material was determined by Annual Conference and is as follows:-

"This Annual Conference deplores the South African Government's policy of apartheid and the actions of the authorities in South Africa which is resulting in the deaths of black workers and their families and the consequential introduction of reporting restrictions.

Consequently, commercials for South African products will neither be produced, processed, distributed nor transmitted.

Further, this Annual Conference of the ACTT declares a ban on all film and video productions involved in South Africa, except for news and current affairs. This ban to be in force until the apartheid system has been removed."

Conference also agreed the following policy:

"This Annual Conference calls for the reinstatement of the ban on ACTT members working in South Africa or for South African companies. The ban will also cover the processing, editing, post production and transmission of material originating in South Africa, with the exception of political documentary and current affairs assignments."

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# "Galina"

## *Galina Vishnevskaya in conversation with George Urban*

### *1. Eastern Europe: The View from Moscow*

George Urban: *We have recently had the 30th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. I am curious to know what you and your friends in Moscow knew and thought about the uprising. You write in your memoirs about the shock and silence with which Khrushchev's revelations at the 20th Party Congress were received in the Soviet Union. The truth, you say, had been known—what amazed the people was that, for the first time in Soviet history, the truth could be spoken from the platform of the Party.*

Galina: What really disgusted me was that Khrushchev and his friends spoke of the crimes committed by Stalin as though these had happened on another planet. Khrushchev said that Stalin was a maniac, a hangman, a coward—but who had created the cult of the personality? Khrushchev and his like were members of the Central Committee or even the Politburo when these shameful things happened. They had been the first to glorify Stalin and satisfy his every whim and fancy. When Stalin told Khrushchev to dance the *gopak*, dance it he did. Now he was denouncing his former master but still insisting that the Party must not wash its dirty linen in public. There was no self-examination or any sharing of responsibility.

*—But surely you and your friends must have experienced relief that so large a part of official Soviet mendacity was being exposed. Stalin's despotism had covered well over half of Soviet history and accounted for the greatest carnage in the history of the Russian, Ukrainian, and other peoples. Wasn't Khrushchev's speech a decisive step in the direction of some sanity?*

Galina: Khrushchev was a cunning peasant. Although he said his speech must remain secret, he saw to it that it was widely distributed. This was a shrewdly calculated move. Before the speech reached the public, the ordinary Russian could say to himself that he knew nothing about Stalin's crimes; he could protest his ignorance. But with the speech in his pocket he could no longer. He was forced to do one of two things: either show his indignation by trying to settle accounts with the entire system that had made Stalinism possible, or keep quiet and thus become an accomplice. Settling accounts with the system was impossible, and in any case, the Russian people had no stomach for it. What, therefore, happened was tacit accompliceship. Much against their will but due to their passivity, the people became tacitly responsible for the crimes of Stalin and had every inducement to go on keeping silent about them.

*—At the recent Bern conference of the Helsinki Process (April-May 1986) Michael Novak, the US Delegate, made one mention of the Gulag in a long and extremely restrained speech. The Russians were annoyed. "How can you be so tactless?", they complained privately. "How can you drag such a word into an international conference that sets out to improve cooperation between our countries. . . ?" Thirty years on, the sense of complicity that you observed in 1956 is obviously still inhibiting the Soviets at both official and unofficial levels.*

Galina: I don't want you to think that the Russian people are cowards. Far from it. During the War they distinguished themselves defending their country against hopeless odds in innumerable ways. But it is one thing to die a hero's death in defence of your loved ones, and quite another to die anony-

*Galina Vishnevskaya, the celebrated singer, formerly a leading soprano of the Bolshoi Opera, is married to the distinguished cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. She and her husband were deprived of their Soviet citizenship in 1978. Her memoirs, "Galina—A Russian Story", were published in New York in 1984 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, and in London in 1985 by Hodder & Stoughton.*

*George Urban's contributions to Encounter include conversations with Max M. Kampelman (February 1985), Alexander Zinoviev (April 1984), Jeane Kirkpatrick (November 1983), Eugene V. Rostow (April 1983), Daniel Bell (February 1983), W. Averell Harriman (November 1981), Zbigniew Brzezinski (May 1981), Leszek Kolakowski (January 1981), and Milovan Djilas (December 1979).*



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mously, in some cellar, after your own countrymen had starved and tortured you. Die for what? There is no heroism in fighting the faceless Moloch of the Soviet System. But you are quite right in suspecting that in 1956 I was greatly disturbed. "What kind of people are we that Stalin could have treated us with so much contempt and in the face of so little protest?"

*—Did you realise that the Hungarians had risen against the same evil of Stalinism; that you and people of your way of thinking had allies in those young men in the streets of Budapest who were trying to throw out the Communist system?*

GALINA: No, I certainly knew very little about Budapest. The picture we had was very similar to the one the Russian people are now being given of Afghanistan: "gangs of counter-revolutionaries and bandits subverting the power of the people and of a fraternal government." To be frank with you, the revelations of Khrushchev's speech about our own past kept us so busy that we had little time to think of much else.

*—But was the official account of what the Hungarians were doing widely believed?*

GALINA: To the extent that anyone paid any attention, yes, it was. But the shock-waves of Stalin's death and of Khrushchev's speech concentrated our minds with so much force on our own past that we were not interested in what was going on in Poland or Hungary. People were beginning to return from the camps. The human drama was right there, in the streets of Moscow. This is what I saw and most gripped me.

Also we believed that people in the "fraternal" countries had it so much better than we had: that they had more food, better clothing, better housing. So why should they rebel at a time when we didn't and couldn't?

I was in Prague in 1955. It was my first trip abroad. I was astounded by all the things people could buy in the shops and the air of general well-being. As to the "freedom" the Czechs were saying they had lost—I just didn't understand what they were talking about. What was the freedom they had lost when their shops were full? 1968 was a very different matter. My husband and I travelled through Czechoslovakia again and we found the country was dead. In 1955 the Czechs had been extremely friendly to Russians. Now we could not open our mouths in Russian, for the Czechs would not answer. We spoke German. We were driving through Czechoslovakia on our way back from England. We were terrified. I felt that if we were recognised as Soviets we might get killed, and this was, mind you, *before* the suppression of the Prague experiment.

*—Is the impression that the East European nations are much better off than people in the Soviet Union still prevalent in Russia?*

GALINA: Very much so—and with reason, because they are, on the whole, better off. It is the theory behind this feeling that is so curious and wrong. When your Russian tourist visits Hungary or East Germany—what does he see? He sees meat and eggs and fresh vegetables and good shoes in the shops, and no lines of people waiting to buy them. He is at once reminded of the misery of shopping in the Soviet Union almost 70 years after the Revolution and 40 years of "peaceful construction". He asks himself, "How can this be?" And he hits upon the easy answer: "The East Europeans have all these things because *we* haven't. We have been depriving ourselves so that these people can make a good life for themselves—and what do we get? Rank ingratitude."

*—"Colonial ingratitude", as the phrase went in the final days of the British Empire. . . .*

GALINA: There was also a feeling that Russian soldiers had shed their blood to liberate these countries from Nazism. The least we could expect from them was loyalty in the face of imperialism. Yet here were these Czechoslovaks plotting to hand their country over to the West Germans! This story was widely rumoured.

*—It was, as we know, an exercise in crude propaganda with no basis in reality. But how widely was it thought to be true?*

GALINA: That small minority of people who were in the habit of listening to foreign radio stations were better informed and did not believe it, but the majority did. They accepted what they were told by the Soviet media.

*—There is a curious phenomenon here. Many accounts of Soviet attitudes—and all accounts of attitudes in Central and Eastern Europe—tell us that the public tend to believe precisely the opposite of what the government wants them to believe. So much for the success of "Agitprop". Yet you are saying that the Russian public was putty in the hands of the authorities. I would have thought that in the case of Czechoslovakia in 1968 —and also of Hungary in 1956—Russian feeling and Soviet interest happened to coincide: hence the widely-shared hostility to Moscow's recalcitrant "allies".*

GALINA: Yes, but there is also another factor we daren't neglect: the sheer exhaustion of the Russian people by the superhuman effort of trying to keep their heads above water. They had no time or energy to be exercised by the precise nature of the 1956 Polish or Hungarian or, later, the Czechoslovak upheavals. They were, therefore, easy targets for Soviet propaganda which knew how to appeal to Russian feelings while serving Soviet interests.

*YOUR BOOK is one long testimony to the basic amorality and treacherousness of Soviet life. We had many accounts of this in earlier works, but I, for one, have seldom seen it articulated with so much pungency. I will not attempt to go down the list of duplicity, double-crossing, and beastliness that run through your pages with the incandescence of a tale yet to be told in its own right. Let me, however, ask*

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*you: Is this an entirely new, **Soviet** phenomenon, or does it stem from pre-Soviet or non-Soviet sources?*

GALINA: This is a difficult one to answer. There is, of course, a group of people in the Soviet Union who take the trouble to inform themselves and have managed to keep their integrity intact. But the broad masses have been corrupted by Soviet ideology. I would go further: even the élite—people who are by no means stupid, people who travel and read Western books—follow the dictates of a consummate opportunism. They have formed themselves into a tightly-knit upper class with the preservation of their power and privileges uppermost in their minds. This requires them to be base and treacherous. Evtushenko is a good example. He will write verses to order; he is one of the Soviet Union's many literary lackeys. The sad thing is that the Soviet system encourages and rewards the prostitution of character.

*—There is a lapidary passage in your book in which you tell us how you gave Evtushenko a resounding dressing-down after he had written some anti-American verses. You reproached him for having a bleeding heart for Cubans, Chileans, Cambodians, Vietnamese, and the American unemployed—but not noticing the murderous living conditions under which ordinary Russian men and women had to exist. I don't suppose anyone had ever given him so merciless a scolding, or ever will. How did he react?*

GALINA: He gave me a sarcastic smile and said I sounded "like a *Boyarynya Morozova*"—one of those 17th-century schismatic women who crossed themselves with two fingers instead of three, and were exiled for their pains.

*—Did you find that offensive?*

GALINA: On the contrary. I gave him the sign of the cross with two fingers extended, and said: "I agree, I am a *Boyarynya Morozova*—and like her I won't abandon my belief in truth, in God, for the things of this world."

*—A righteous (not to say self-righteous) woman of your outspoken character seems to be able to get away with things in the Soviet Union that astonish me. I am not now thinking so much about your quarrel with Evtushenko as those stormy encounters you had with Soviet leaders and important men and women in the higher flights of the Government. If so much criticism and opposition was (privately, at least) tolerated, isn't there hope that the Soviet system may yet reform itself?*

GALINA: Ah, but you must not draw unwarranted conclusions. Rostropovich and I were famous artists. We were in great demand at home and abroad. The Soviet state liked to parade us as typical products of the system. We had a certain license in talking to the *apparat*, and the *apparat* showed a kind of special indulgence for a great prima donna who was vocationally temperamental and a bit uncontrollable. But the kind of no-nonsense criticism they pocketed from me they would never put up with from the ordinary citizen. I don't want you to think that, behind the scenes, the Soviet system is replete with courageous critics and bureaucrats willing to take their criticism. Cowardice and treachery are the real names of the game.

*—In what way, to be more precise, does the system encourage these?*

GALINA: Oh, for the average mortal sometimes in ridiculously small ways: a 50 or 100 rouble monthly pay rise; the promise of an extra few square metres of living accommodation; some advantage in your children's schooling and, in special cases, the promise of foreign travel. In the Soviet Union, where human happiness is measured by the spoonful, these little extras carry enormous importance. In order to gain them, most people are willing to prostitute themselves. It's a jungle. I often ask myself: What has Russia turned into? The idea of decency, honour, conscience, duty has long ceased to have any meaning in our country.

*YOU QUOTE Alexander Tvardovsky telling your husband: "Decent people are almost extinct in Russia. . . ." But Tvardovsky was the famous Soviet editor of "Novy Mir" who had launched Solzhenitsyn on his career. Rostropovich is a distinguished Soviet musician, and you are a Soviet singer. Four people who saw what was wrong with the system, and had the courage to say so and do something about it. One assumes, indeed one knows, that there are others. Don't these small but important pockets of insight and courage entitle us to think that the reverse side of Soviet baseness is an exceptionally deep yearning for truth and a selfless determination to act on it? Isn't the presence of "ten righteous men" enough to make a difference, as in the story of Sodom in "Genesis"?*

GALINA: In Biblical times "ten righteous men" may well have been enough to make a difference, as it is also enough today in some free countries to make up a balanced jury. But in Biblical times you had the Law which was universally respected. Even under the Czars there was law and due process. The Bolshevik revolutionaries, along with everyone else in the realm, were protected by that legality and survived to make a revolution and destroy the old order.

But with the old order they destroyed Law too. The Soviet Union is a lawless country or, to put it more precisely, the law is what the ruling class says it is. Russia today is run by one vast Mafia. Its tentacles reach into every nook and cranny of the land. The resistance of heroic individuals cannot chop them off. You may well be right in saying that battling against so great an evil brings out the best in those who have undertaken to battle it; but, in the end, the individuals go under while the faceless monster goes on.

Look at the four people you mentioned: Solzhenitsyn is in exile; Rostropovich is in exile; I am in exile; Tvardovsky lost *Novy Mir* and died a much disillusioned man. A system that treats its thinking élite like that is a disaster for the people who are forced to live under it, and for the rest of the world which is exposed to its influence.

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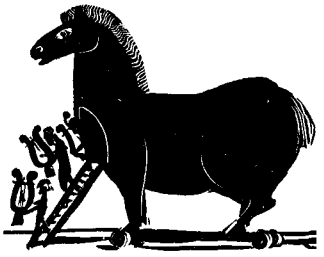
## 2. Could Artists Leaven Soviet Society?



*YOUR VIEWS strike me as being close to those of Alexander Zinoviev.[1] He, too, believes that the Soviet system is wicked, but he also believes that it works, that it is a seamless thing which cannot be destroyed by courageous individuals and is therefore here to stay.*

GALINA: I have great respect for Zinoviev and agree with many of his ideas. He has been much maligned by the recent Soviet emigration because he has the guts to speak the truth both about the Soviet system and about the Russian and non-Russian peoples' complex involvement with it.

Ideology is the root of the problem, as both Zinoviev and Solzhenitsyn rightly say. Soviet ideology has had an appalling impact on all aspects of our lives. It's like a weed one cannot dig up: the more you pull at it the more it seems to grow. To grow a worthwhile tree takes a careful gardener and a long time, but a weed comes up in a week; it is unstoppable.

*—Human nature being what it is, I can see that a convenient lie has something to commend it, but an inconvenient one? Surely an ideology that landed your father or sister in the "Gulag" and required you to praise the system for having sent them there is not only abhorrent by any standards I can think of, but a little inconvenient too.*

GALINA: It may be inconvenient but it is inescapable. It is required of Soviet people to lie in public places throughout their lives: they do it at school, at the *Komsomol*, at their workplaces, at public meetings, in letters they are told to sign, and so on. Privately, however, they know that a lie is a lie, but they have nowhere to go to say so. This double-think deforms everyone's character and is the root cause of the corruptibility of Soviet man and Soviet institutions.

*—Leszek Kolakowski puts a slightly different gloss on the same phenomenon. He says, like you, that the habit of public lying and the knowledge that a lie is a lie deforms the character. But he adds rather significantly that, having gone along with public lying for so long and so consistently, one ends up making subtle excuses for the lie, even in private life, because one cannot face up to the fact that one is a spineless and worthless human being. One has, as it were, invested in a lie and cannot now disinvest for fear of losing one's entire capital.*

GALINA: I completely agree. The coexistence of these two perspectives has done great damage to everyone's sanity in the Soviet Union.

*—Shostakovich, describing Stalin's persecution of Akhmatova and Zoschenko (in Solomon Volkov's "Testimony"), puts the phenomenon we are discussing in this way:*

> **"If you are smeared with mud from head to toe on the orders of the leader and teacher, don't even think of wiping it off. You bow and say thanks. . . . No one will come to your defence and . . . you won't be able to let off steam among friends, because there are no friends in these pitiable circumstances."**

GALINA: Well, I have no doubt that Shostakovich expressed thoughts of that kind, but I have a problem with the authenticity of Volkov's book. What Shostakovich, whom I knew well, is represented as saying is entirely in line with the sentiments I heard him express. These were public knowledge in Moscow. I should think Volkov collected Shostakovich's views and stories between two covers, attributing them directly to him as though they had been spoken to Volkov. I just do not believe that a conversation of that kind ever took place. That does not, however, mean that the passage you quoted is inauthentic. It is certainly a truthful description of the self-abasement of the Soviet intelligentsia under Stalin and Zhdanov.

*—So what we have in the Soviet Union is a form of collective schizophrenia? Andrei Amalrik once said to me that no one who has been through the Soviet experience can call himself quite normal.*

GALINA: I agree. In the West people do not, alas, understand to what extent Soviet society is also a dangerous society to do business with. First, in a general sense, it is impossible to predict what will come out of Soviet society, precisely because it has a split mind. A sick person is unpredictable, and unpredictability is a destabilising factor.

But Soviet society is also dangerous in another and, paradoxically, predictable sense. If tomorrow young members of this society were told, "You are going to fight", they would go and fight without asking questions. There would be no need to persuade them to volunteer or to worry about the effects of peace propaganda as there is in some Western countries. They would be told: "The Capitalists over there have everything you haven't got: they've been stealing things that rightfully belong to you—go and get them, go and fight for the Fatherland", and off they would go to get them and fight for the "Fatherland".

*—A powerful combination of patriotism and envy. But there is another theory which holds that Soviet aggression and the average citizen's willingness to fight are due to domestic frustration. As there is nothing you can seemingly do about an unjust, oppressive system, you fashion your indignation and pugnacity into feelings directed against outside enemies—capitalists, imperialists, people who allegedly threaten your survival, and so on. The Soviet leaders are said to be aware of this frustration and route it in the direction in which it is, in any case, only too willing to go. Writing about his impressions of Czarist Russia in 1839, the Marquis de Custine presciently observed:*

[1] See in ENCOUNTER (April and May 1984), George Urban and Alexander Zinoviev, "A Dissenter as a Soviet Man".

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**"This essentially conquering nation, greedy as a result of its hardships, atones in advance for the hope of exercising tyranny abroad by a degrading submission at home. . . ."**

GALINA: I believe this is part of the motivation. Our people are driven by envy, but they are also driven by a terrible urge to let off steam and destroy anything that may stand in their way. And remember, the Soviet Union has a population of 270 million. The guidable aggression of so many people is a danger the outside world is not quite aware of.

YOU SAID THAT SOVIET MINDS *worked on two levels, and that the people were, therefore, in many ways unpredictable. Aren't they unpredictable to their leaders too? Shouldn't the leaders worry that there is no telling how the sick man might behave under the pressure of this or that event? The spectacular slowness with which the Soviet authorities reacted to the Chernobyl disaster seems to indicate that their anxiety to avoid panic was greater than their sense of danger from the radioactive fall-out. They seemed to fear the Russian and Ukrainian people more than the atom.*

GALINA: The Soviet leaders have always been wary of uncontrolled popular reactions. But they are no fools; they understand their own people and society and have both well in hand. How do they do that? By running, as I have said before, a Mafia-type of ruling class on a nation-wide scale. It has every feature of the real thing, including "godfathers". There is no evading the hand of the conspiracy. If anyone steps out of line he is destroyed. That spectacle keeps the people in their places.

*—Students of the Russian historical scene often describe the Russian people as a "dark", turbulent, unpredictable force. Professor Eduard Goldstücker, one of the Czech intellectual leaders of the 1968 "Prague Spring", once observed that the Russian people is*

**"an enigmatic and dangerous dragon: it is in chains, it has been in chains for centuries, and when it breaks its chains it threatens to spread chaos and disaster."**

*But Goldstücker felt that not only were the Soviet leaders afraid of the Russian people but the Soviet dissidents feared them too:*

**"Their image of the people was (and is) that of some dark, anarchic, uncontrollable mass—*tyomni narod*—a kind of lava that engulfs and drowns you if you don't put up barriers against it."**

*Is this overstated?*

GALINA: Under the Czars the people may well have been a fearsome force because, despite all the rigours of Czarist rule, the monarch's powers were restricted. There was no totalitarian state, there were no state-controlled media, society had not been brainwashed and atomised. When the *muzhiks* were on the march (which was not too often) there was indeed something awe-inspiring and unpredictable about them. But that freedom from oppression is gone and the people are no longer free enough to be anarchistic and uncontrollable. Soviet law is made by the Mafia; the courts are controlled by the Mafia; thought is controlled by the Mafia. Any idea of rebellion is strangled at birth.

I often marvel at the naivety of Western politicians and journalists when they express disappointment that the Soviet "*nomenklatura*" fails to observe some provision or other of an international agreement or indeed Soviet "law". Will they ever understand that Soviet thinking is guided by the laws of expediency and nothing else—that it is useless to talk about "treaty violations" because, to the Soviet mind, an agreement is there to be exploited, not respected? My short answer, then, to your question is: the "dark masses" are completely under the control of a parasitic ruling class.

In the summer of 1962 there was major unrest in Novocherkassk and the surrounding industrial areas. The militia and security police went in, guns were used, and many people were killed before order could be restored. The strikes and clashes which had been sparked off by the simultaneous rise of food prices and reduction in wages went on for a period of weeks. I had to come to *England* to learn, more than ten years later, what had happened. Doesn't that tell you reams about the state of freedom in the Soviet Union?

At the time of the Novocherkassk unrest I lived in Moscow and moved in what you might call the highest circles—among Party and Government leaders and the cream of the intelligentsia. But not once did anyone so much as mention Novocherkassk to me and, for all I know, not many were allowed to know that it had happened. In a country where so terrible an event can be permanently withheld from the public there is very little chance that the people might get out of hand. Novocherkassk and its surroundings have a population of several hundred thousand; yet that large population, too, was keeping mum. It was party to the Soviet conspiracy of silence.

*—This tells us something not only about the system but also about the success of popular intimidation and, perhaps, the docility of the citizen. The totalitarian system seems to work—it has managed to seal itself off from the outside world. Varlam Shalamov's stories about the horrors of Kolyma took decades to come out, and there the victims were counted in their tens of thousands. Marshall McLuhan's "global village" remains fiction.*

GALINA: It *is* a most sinister phenomenon, but there is a simple explanation. In a one-party state no one has the possibility of questioning the government; in a one-party state all means of communication are controlled by the authorities; in a one-party state the citizens of Novocherkassk wouldn't dare to tell what they saw because there is no legitimate organisation that would come to their support. In other words, the "global village" only exists where democracy exists. The silence of Soviet society does not mean that everyone in the Soviet Union has been beaten into submission, but that the tyranny is merciless and all-pervasive.

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*—But even much closer to the heart of Europe, in the Turkish-inhabited areas of Bulgaria, atrocities were committed by the Communist authorities in 1984-85 that took more than a year to travel west and are still not fully known to us. Recently, one Bulgarian diplomat said to my face that no such atrocities had occurred—but an hour earlier I had met some of the victims. The Amnesty International report was shoved aside by him as "hearsay" based on "false evidence". In any case, said the Bulgarian, the Turks had done much worse to the Bulgarian-speaking minority in Turkey!*

GALINA: If the Bulgarians or Soviets had had a party or parties in opposition it would have been impossible to maintain the cover-up. A one-party state is a corrupt state, and a danger both to its own people and to its neighbours.

*—The globe has become too small to permit the survival of ideological dictatorships?*

GALINA: It has—

*— . . . and this is especially true in the light of Chernobyl?*

GALINA: Yes, Chernobyl has once again demonstrated that the Soviet system is not only a politically dangerous dictatorship but a technologically backward one at that. It has shown no sense of responsibility for the Russian people or the rest of Europe. One wonders whether the civilised world can afford to have such a neighbour.

GENERALISATIONS ABOUT *national character are always facile and dangerous. It is therefore with some reluctance that I put to you one stereotypical judgment about the Russian people which holds that the Russians get landed with tyrannical régimes of one kind or another because they lack civic courage. This is a variant of "nations get the government they deserve." Do you feel it is true?*

GALINA: What in particular do you have in mind?

*—There are many instances in Russian memoirs, yours and others, where ordinary people behave with great callousness towards the victims of persecution. When the NKVD's van arrives to collect some family for deportation, the neighbours look on and nod in approval. Pasternak, on receiving the Nobel Prize, is reviled and condemned by the authorities, but the Moscow writers at once follow suit, denouncing him as a "Judas", a "mercenary scribbler", "an enemy and betrayer of his own people", and the like. Your own father, having served ten years in Stalin's camps under Article 58, comes out and promptly denounces you at the Bolshoi for having failed to report that you knew why he had been arrested. As you write in your memoirs:*

> **"Of course he hoped that I would be kicked out of the Bolshoi. But Papa had miscalculated: times had changed. He died of lung cancer two years later, one more moral monster spawned by the Soviet régime."**

*Reading your accounts of Soviet indifference, I was chillingly*

## *Indecent Exposure*

WITH *metronomic regularity the Soviet régime does something outrageous and the U.S. government indulges in perfunctory displays of indignation, to no effect.*

*The most substantial response to the invasion of Afghanistan—the grain embargo—was ended by a rhetorically conservative President who, five years later, with the slaughter of Afghans continuing, is subsidising grain sales to the Soviet Union.*

*When the Soviet Union orchestrated the suffocation of Poland's Solidarity, Mr Reagan refused to use as a weapon the credits that sustain all mendicant economies of the Evil Empire. To the Korean Airlines massacre, he responded with a rhetorical vigor inversely proportional to his policy response. In 1985, when a U.S. Army major was shot by Soviet troops while performing his duties in East Germany, and was left on the ground to bleed slowly to death, Mr Reagan said such "episodes" whetted his appetite for summits.*

*Given this squalid record, who is mystified that, in dealing with Mr Reagan (who in 1980 said: By cracky, no one will take Americans hostage on my watch), the Soviets made Mr Daniloff a hostage and Mr Reagan promptly offered to make a deal? Actually, "The New York Times" is mystified.*

ITS EDITORIAL, **"The Journalist Held Hostage" (4 September), the tone of which is "Say it ain't so, Mikhail!", displayed the intellectual contortions of incorrigible détentists. There are, said the "Times", several possible explanations of Mr Daniloff's arrest, "but none speak [sic] well of the Soviet government." How vexing: an incident that complicates speaking well of that government.**

**The "Times" wonders whether, if Mr Daniloff was seized in response to Mr Zakharov's arrest, the KGB acted "on its own", showing "alarming independence." On the other hand, if—say it ain't so!—the Politburo approved, the "Times" sees an "alarming" sign.**

READ SLOWLY: *"a sign that [the Politburo's] bureaucratic interests take precedence over diplomacy and decency."*

*So, if the Soviet régime has lapsed this once from decency, it must have done so because of some quirky "interest." This is a way of defining the episode as aberrational, not characteristic.*

*The "Times" does wax stern. The incident is "an ominous reminder of how pendular may be the 'openness' promised" by Mr Gorbachev. Not since Stalin's reign has a frame-up resulted in an American being imprisoned, and the "Times" wonders: "Does Mr Gorbachev really mean to summon up that ghost?"*

GHOSTS, YET. **The problem is not Stalin's ghost, it is that Mr Gorbachev and his colleagues are Stalin's children.**

*George F. Will*
*in the* WASHINGTON POST

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*reminded of Pastor Martin Niemöller's account of public indifference under another dictatorship:*

**When they came for the Jews, I was not a Jew,**
**so I did not protest;**
**When they came for the Communists, I was not a Communist,**
**so I did not protest;**
**When they came for the trade unionists, I was not a trade unionist,**
**so I did not protest;**
**When they came for me, there was nobody left to protest.**

GALINA: It is not exactly that most people approved of what was going on under Stalin, but they were malicious and indifferent. They saw what was happening and said: "Well, that's how things are—I'm having a bad time, why shouldn't *you* have a bad time too?" It's terrible.

Let me tell you a story which has done the rounds in Russia.

An Italian, an Englishman, a Frenchman and a Russian are summoned by God.

"You may pronounce one wish for your people and it will be fulfilled", God says.

The Italian says: "My wish is that the Italians should be the best singers in the world."

The Englishman says: "I want my people to be the best horsemen in the world."

The Frenchman says: "I want my nation to have the most beautiful women in the world."

"And what about you?", God says to the Russian.

"I want my neighbour Vasily's mare to drop dead."

That encapsulates it to perfection.

*—Is this appalling attitude an expression of straightforward envy inspired by poverty and deprivation (as Left-wing sociologists tend to believe) or is it part of the culture—perhaps both?*

GALINA: Well, Russian serfdom is only 120-odd years behind us, and the habits of serfdom seem to die hard. This is, I must confess, not a very satisfactory explanation because in the USA slavery ended later than serfdom did in Russia, and yet in America you have a flourishing democracy, with the black community not a bit behind the whites in their demands for a fuller and more and more egalitarian democracy. But I feel this attitude of malicious envy *is* rooted in serfdom which has now been reinforced by Communist ideology. Life in a Communist society, with its permanent restrictions, deprivations and bottlenecks, is a rat-race.

*—Hasn't this gross form of envy and jealousy also something to do with the materialistic message of Marxism-Leninism and the dwindling impact of Christianity? Where materialism shapes the governing principle of society, and the Church has become an adjunct of the State, perhaps we should not be surprised to find that a grabbing and "something-for-nothing" type of attitude defines the ethos of society. One is, of course, aware that the tone of society in the so-called capitalist countries can be ugly and mercenary too. But there a higher standard-of-living and the presence of countervailing influences of a non-materialistic and anti-materialistic nature usually prevent the cruder types of acquisitiveness from becoming the arbiters of taste and ethos. In much of Western Europe it is a mark of bad breeding to be seen to be preoccupied with income and material possessions. If that is hypocrisy, surely one would like to see more of it.*

GALINA: Certainly Christianity and the Orthodox Church as balancing influences can hardly be said to exist in the Soviet Union. I have no doubt that a basic variant of the Christian teaching is still deeply embedded in the hearts of many Russians; but this has perhaps more to do with the Russian tradition of seeking a kind of all-consoling spiritual order, especially at times of hardship, than with the policies currently espoused by Orthodoxy.

The Church is now an obedient tool of the Communist state. It has compromised itself in the eyes of the faithful. Its priests cannot appear before their congregations and give witness of their faith because they have to answer for their sermons.

*—So Christianity as a leavening influence, in the sense of* Matthew *13:11,*[2] *is not on its way back, as some observers have suggested?*

GALINA: I hope that it is, but I wonder.

ISN'T IT TRUE, *though, that when one form of spirituality is suppressed it surfaces in other forms and in surprising places? In Solomon Volkov's book "Testimony", for example, Shostakovich and some of his friends are described as "holy fools",* yurodivy *composers and artists. This is a phenomenon we are familiar with in Russian literature: men and women who play the fool as court jesters once did, exposing evil and the abuse of power. They have visions, flout conventions, break the moral law, are irreverent to authority and enjoy a certain license.*

*In one spectacular instance Shostakovich himself mentions the pianist Maria Yudina as a "holy fool", and tells us how Yudina once received an envelope from Stalin containing 20,000 roubles as a token of his appreciation of her musicianship. Whereupon Yudina wrote the following letter to Stalin:*

**"I thank you, Iosif Vissarionovich, for your aid. I will pray for you day and night and ask the Lord to forgive your great sins before the people and the country. The Lord is merciful and He'll forgive you. I gave the money to the church that I attend. . . ."**

*The holy fool's immunity worked. Nothing happened to Yudina, and Shostakovich relates that Yudina's recording of a*

[2] "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in the measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." *Matthew* 13:11.

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*Mozart piano concerto (No. 23) was said to have been on the record-player when Stalin was found dead in his dacha. It was the last thing he is said to have heard.*

*I mention these anecdotes (and I could quote others) because I wonder whether courageous people of that sort aren't to be thought of as unconventional representatives of the same spiritual estate that used to make itself heard through the Church but can do so no longer?*

GALINA: I would not agree that Shostakovich belonged to the category of holy fools. That is Volkov's view, and I feel it is unwarranted and would be so judged by Shostakovich. Shostakovich did sustain what you might call certain profoundly religious sentiments and was much preoccupied with death, but there was nothing in his character that would remotely fit your description of a holy fool.

Now there are, of course, people in the Soviet Union who rave and rage and talk in symbols and evoke the kingdom to come—but they have been put behind bars or sent to psychiatric institutions. Soviet society will not tolerate them.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE *popular bards who appealed with so much force to the Soviet Union's post-Gulag mood of degradation and agony? You give us a fine sketch of the impact of one of them, Vladimir Vysotsky. He "became an idol of the people, who sank with him into the depths of drunkenness and degradation. . . . Weeping drunken tears, they wail along with him", and so on.*

*In pre-Communist days people of this kind sought consolation in Christianity or some revolutionary brotherhood. In an un-Christian environment they resort to such relief as they can find, and if the name of that relief is a wailing Vysotsky, so be it. Wouldn't you say that the men who offer such relief perform, in a sense, a priestly (albeit pervertedly priestly) function?*

GALINA: Vysotsky was an ordinary talented song-writer who was disciplined enough not to say everything he felt could be said. He was, therefore, not a holy fool. He was more of a Villonesque character than a half-baked prophet or defrocked priest. Certainly he offered consolation and solidarity.

*—The question I'm getting at is: does Soviet society provide or tolerate outlets for the spiritual needs of the citizen apart from romanticising "socialist construction" which is bogus, or elevating (as under Stalin) the leader to the status of a demi-god?*

*Let me put it to you that the vessels of spiritual escape in Soviet society—the holy fools of our day—may very well be people like yourself: artists, especially musicians, who can say things through their pianos and singing and painting that no one else can. The wordless media have a great advantage here over books and poems. Their "message" is more difficult to identify and it is, therefore, harder to dictate to their authors.*

*One excellent example of this is mentioned in your book: the Soviet government's hesitation to allow Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony to be performed. The Leningrad Party "aktiv" which scrutinised the symphony for ideological rectitude first felt that the symphony was "pessimistic" and "un-Soviet". They lectured Shostakovich on how to write music. But Shostakovich had to save his symphony. As you tell us,*

> **"He tried to deceive them in the most rudimentary way, and succeeded! All he had to do was use other words to describe the huge complex of human passions and suffering that is so apparent in his music—he described his music to the Party as *joyous* and *optimistic*—and the entire pack dashed off, satisfied."**

*What I am suggesting is that in a totalitarian society it is people like yourself who are most likely to be the symbols of dissent from orthodoxy—"holy fools", if you like: "liberation musicians".*

GALINA: Here I agree with you entirely. I felt to be that symbol with great intensity when I sang Leonora in Beethoven's *Fidelio*—the very first time it was put on the stage in the Soviet Union. I wasn't at first quite conscious of that symbol in the sense in which you have just expressed it, but as the rehearsals went on I realised more and more distinctly that this was a "liberation-opera" and it was really about *us* in Soviet society.

Of course, I knew from the beginning that *Fidelio* was about freedom, honour and love, but it grew on me only gradually that the words I was singing about freedom, the conquest of injustice and oppression were directly addressed to my audiences, and that *I* was the person entrusted by the music to impart them. My God, it was an unforgettable experience.

There I was, like Jeanne d'Arc, standing on the stage of the world, calling on the people to release those unjustly imprisoned and punish the wicked. It was a moment that changed my life.

## 3. "Fidelio" under Soviet Skies

THERE IS *that memorable scene in the first Act of "Fidelio" where Rocco, at Leonora's urging, allows the prisoners to come out of their dungeon. Emaciated and in rags, and blinded by the sun to which their eyes had become unaccustomed, they stumble out and sing Beethoven's famous prayer to light and liberty* "O welche Lust in freier Luft". *What did you feel when you saw them approaching?*

GALINA: I had my back turned to the audience even though I had an aria coming, but I simply could not take my eyes off this devastating spectacle of human suffering. I felt that it was I

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personally who had brought them out from prison and was leading them and the public on to liberty. I was overwhelmed.

*—This was in March 1954, a year after the death of Stalin—after the death of the man about whom the Soviet people had been made to sing:*

> **O Great Stalin, O leader of the peoples,**
> **Thou who brought man to birth, . . .**
> **Thou who makes the spring to bloom,**
> **Thou who makes vibrate the chords of music.**[3]

*Did the Soviet audiences realise that "Fidelio" was about* their *fate—about the fate of their brothers and sisters who had been in the camps by the million and were just beginning to be released if they were lucky enough to have survived?*

GALINA: No, they did not. Shostakovich and his friends, of course, did; but the public just didn't get the message. Why didn't they get it? Well, in Moscow the sort of people who go to the Bolshoi are not your men and women of culture. They tended to be people who had business in Moscow and felt it was good form to be seen at the Bolshoi, or men and women who were given tickets *ex officio* and were more or less *sent* to the opera. They went for the ambience and the spectacle, or out of a sense of duty, but were often quite irritated by the music which they didn't understand.

*—I find it a little hard to believe that the public could have been so insensitive. Didn't they know what was happening around them? Could they have missed the meaning of your aria:* "Zur Freiheit, zur Freiheit ins himmlische Reich"*?*

GALINA: They didn't make the connection. Some felt such things happened in Spain or in Germany, not in the Soviet Union. They didn't identify with Leonora or Florestan.

*—In 1978, under the late Karl Boehm, I saw one of the great performances of "Fidelio" at the Munich opera. Boehm appended this observation to the programme:*

> **"Und mit dem 'Fidelio' hat er [Beethoven] nicht für irgendeine Freiheit, sondern für die persönliche Freiheit des Menschen gekämpft.**
> **(With 'Fidelio' Beethoven fought not for any kind of freedom, but for man's personal freedom.)"**

*I fail to see how this could have been lost on your average Soviet audience. If they missed that, what* **did** *they understand?*

GALINA: Quite. As you say, in 1954 there was hardly a Soviet family that had not lost one or several of its members in the Gulag. And yet our audiences did not make the connection. But it wasn't only the people who didn't feel *Fidelio*'s sharp relevance to the state of society in Stalin's Russia, but the Party and the Government didn't either.

Throughout the long period of preparation and rehearsal the authorities never showed the slightest sign of realising that we were about to stage an opera deeply subversive of the Soviet system. In Russia operatic productions go through various stages of censorship. At each stage the message, the décor, the diction, and so on are examined for political suitability. *Fidelio* passed every stage of censorship. No one felt that Beethoven was addressing the oppressed masses of the Soviet Union.

*—But, surely, you did?*

GALINA: I first felt the message to be coming out of the music only. I didn't take in the plot or relate it to Stalin's Russia. But the music spoke for itself. That started me on my journey. The relevance of the libretto to our situation emerged as we went on rehearsing.

*—Did the other singers and musicians feel that they were performing "dissident" music?*

GALINA: By the time it came to the first night, most of them felt that this was a daring enterprise. After all, *Fidelio* had never been performed in Russia or the Soviet Union, and here we were, one year after the great leader's death, putting it on the stage with our best talents. But they didn't think we were in danger, and we weren't, because the people's finer senses had been too dulled and they were too downtrodden to pick up what Beethoven was saying.

*—You will recall how Wilhelm Furtwängler attracted some formidable criticism because he conducted "Fidelio" in Hitler's Berlin during World War II and sometimes in the presence of Nazi dignitaries. It was said that he and his musicians were mocking Beethoven's music by the sheer act of performing it in that environment. After 1945 Furtwängler and his friends defended themselves by saying that it was precisely in that environment that "Fidelio" had to be performed—those who could hear understood the message. What I'm saying is that "Fidelio" was a litmus-test for many Germans, especially in the German emigration. It does not seem to have been one in the Soviet Union, or in the Russian emigration.*

GALINA: No, it wasn't. But there was another and quite mundane factor which accounts for the indifference. The Soviet audiences did not, as I say, much like the music—they found it heavy going. They were used to Moscow's staple fare: *Aida, Rigoletto, La Traviata, Boris Godunov, Eugene Onegin, Pique Dame*. Even Mozart was a stranger. *Fidelio* bored them. It's all very sad.

THE MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT *of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" reported recently (20 June 1986) that the death of individual Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan, though keenly felt by their families, was causing no national unrest and was not even registering in the minds of people as an "issue".*

**"There is in Russia no social fabric, no collective**

[3] "Hymn to Stalin", published in *Pravda*, 28 August 1938.

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**consciousness that would create spontaneous reactions of the kind the leadership would have to fear. The ability to abstract from individual suffering and to ascribe it to overall causes is just not there."**

*Isn't this inability to abstract from individual misfortune our best clue to your audiences' failure to react to "Fidelio"?*

GALINA: I would agree. Individual people in Russia do react, and react very strongly, to their losses in Afghanistan, but you are right in saying they regard them as an act of God and will leave it at that.

*—But there is another slight puzzle. You started rehearsing "Fidelio" while Stalin was still alive. Clearly, the authorities did not expect that it would attract his displeasure. Why didn't they? As we know from Shostakovich and others, Stalin was extremely suspicious of "Hamlet" and "Macbeth". "Stalin could stand neither of these plays", Shostakovich observed. ". . . A criminal ruler—what could attract the leader and teacher in that theme?"*

*Didn't considerations of this kind enter the minds of the cultural* apparat *when the decision to mount "Fidelio" was made?*

GALINA: There was a report in Moscow that Stalin admired Beethoven the way he admired everything spectacular and exalted. That may have given encouragement to the cultural *apparat*. But I don't believe the rumour was true. Stalin was too much of a primitive. My personal feeling is that he could tell what a straight *play* was about—a dithering prince of Denmark or a tearful King Lear were clearly not to his taste—but he was less sure about music.

But one can think of another explanation. A believing Communist audience could have persuaded itself that *Fidelio* was about the Liberation of Man as envisaged by Lenin. By the same token, your fascist audiences in Berlin during the War could easily have thought that *Fidelio* was about the liberation of, shall we say, Europe from Bolshevik or plutocratic oppression—and *wept*. Either must have been pretty difficult to believe, but there is no limit to the perversion of the human mind and to wishful thinking.

*—To what extent does the ordinary Soviet citizen really believe that his Party and Government stand for freedom, seeing that there is unfreedom around him wherever he looks?*

GALINA: The ordinary citizen in the Soviet Union does not know what freedom is. Having grown up in unfreedom he is not in a position to recognise freedom, much less to criticise unfreedom. Until I came to the West, I didn't understand what freedom was either. I was not manacled—and I could walk—therefore I imagined I was free. It was only abroad that I began to have some inkling of the real meaning of liberty.

*—In other words, the Soviet authorities know what they are doing when they keep the Soviet population sealed off from the outside world?*

GALINA: Oh yes, from the Mafia's point of view it's a faultless policy.

*—I can, just, understand that people are not familiar with the meaning of freedom (one is reminded of the Grand Inquisitor chapter in Dostoevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov"). But wouldn't you say everyone can recognise unfreedom, repression, serfdom?*

GALINA: No, If you are born in the Soviet Union under conditions of unfreedom you don't realise there is an alternative way of living. You don't understand the concept of unfreedom because you don't know what freedom is. Put a free animal in a cage: it will at once grasp the meaning of unfreedom and rage against it; but an animal that has never had the liberty to roam the forests because it was born in a zoo will probably not feel so deprived.

Tourists visiting the Soviet Union tend to misread the Soviet system. Even if they feel they have been shown everything there is to see in Russia, they will not grasp Russia's essential unfreedom because they are on a visit and thus always at liberty to go back home. But if you haven't got that liberty—if, every minute of your life, every choice you make or cannot make depends on the system down to the smallest detail—then you know in your bones that your physical and mental autonomy is destroyed. You are an object in the hands of forces you cannot control; you are *nothing* and *count* for nothing. You're not only unfree but you don't even realise that you are—which is the ultimate unfreedom.

YOU RELATE IN YOUR MEMOIRS *that at one stage in your early life at the Bolshoi the* KGB *tried to enlist you as an informer. You went along to the extent of not rejecting the* KGB *outright, but when the first opportunity of freeing yourself from this connection came up in the shape of an admiring Marshal Bulganin, you grabbed it and sent the* KGB *men packing.*

GALINA: I did.

*—In so doing you must have realised that accepting the* KGB *connection would have been an unbearable limitation on your freedom. You were a child of Soviet society and had no model of freedom you could emulate; yet you had an instinctive understanding of what was right and what was wrong, what was freedom and what was unfreedom.*

GALINA: Not quite. I could recognise *treachery*. I knew that it was wrong to spy on my fellow musicians (because that is what the *KGB* wanted me to do). You can be an unfree person and yet recognise treachery.

*—Whether you can or cannot is a moot point; I will not press you. But surely when you asked Bulganin to stop the* KGB *you must have responded to the voice of some moral indignation in your soul for which there were no models in Soviet society?*

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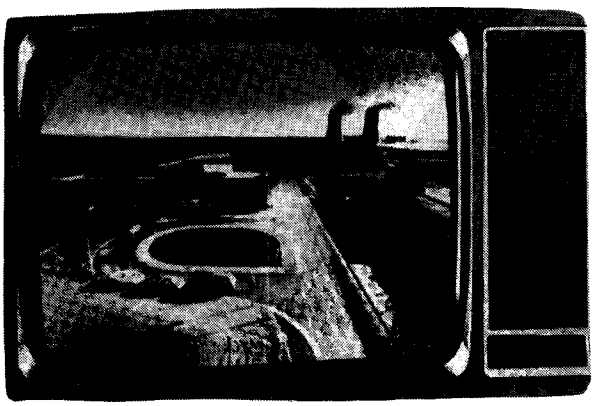

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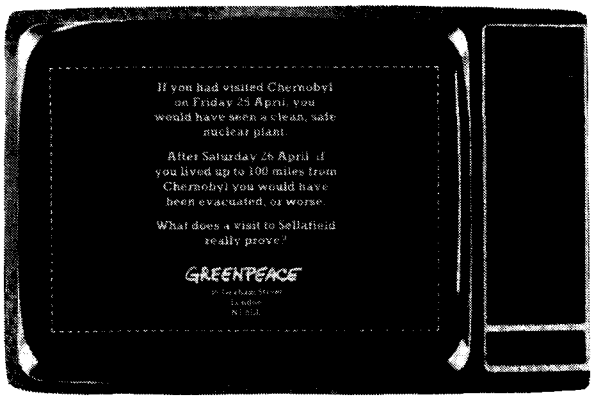
If you had visited Chernobyl
on Friday 25 April, you
would have seen a clean, safe
nuclear plant.
After Saturday 26 April if
you lived up to 100 miles from
Chernobyl you would have
been evacuated, or worse.
What does a visit to Sellafield
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**We believe there should be a full and open debate on nuclear power. (Especially after the horrific accident at Chernobyl.)**

**But it appears the authorities don't share our view.**

**Perhaps they're afraid you'll want to close down places like Sellafield.**

**Certainly, that's the only reason we can see for banning our commercial.**

**While allowing millions of people to see the one from British Nuclear Fuels PLC.**

**We don't want to stop you going to see an exhibition at Sellafield. And we wouldn't dream of preventing BNFL from putting their case for nuclear power.**

**But we do object to being prevented from putting our case too.**

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**Or fill in the petition below.**

**STATEMENT OF CONCERN**

**We, the undersigned, wish to express our deep concern over the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) ruling which permits pro-nuclear television advertising by British Nuclear Fuels PLC while denying access to the same medium to the environmental pressure group Greenpeace, which has expressed opposition to nuclear power on environmental, safety and economic grounds.**
**In the interests of a fair debate, a one sided presentation of the case for nuclear power, however discreetly it is portrayed, should not be permitted.**

**Name** _____

**Address** _____

_____

**Tick box if you would like to receive information about Greenpeace including the broadsheet, Facts you should know about nuclear power.** ☐
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*Indeed, it was Communist Party policy "that every citizen of the USSR be an* NKVD *agent", as Mikoyan put it in 1937, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the* Cheka *secret police.*

GALINA: Yes, I was led by moral revulsion. To resist treachery, baseness, duplicity—these are God's instructions. You don't have to learn them.

*—But doesn't your yearning for freedom also come self-evidently from the inner recesses of your mind—without models and without "instruction"?*

GALINA: I don't think so. The Ten Commandments are one thing; freedom is another. Freedom can be negative.

*—Perhaps we should think of two different kinds of freedom: freedom* **from** *and freedom* **to**. *The first is, I think, easy to recognise: "I am free from imprisonment." The second is more tricky: "I am free to emigrate to Australia. . . . I am free to reject my heritage; I am free to support* Solidarity, *and so on.*

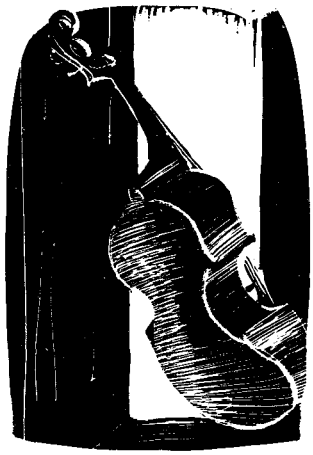
GALINA: I accept that. It is the second that was beyond my understanding while I lived in the Soviet Union. I have had to live in England, France, and the US for twelve years to comprehend the meaning of real freedom—the freedom of choice. That is perhaps why I have now lost every vestige of homesickness. In Russia my "free" life was limited to life on the stage of the theatre. Real life began when my cue came up and I began to sing. Off-stage I was *playing* at life, not living it. Here in the West I can live a rounded life as a free person, on-stage, off-stage.

*—You said your realisation of the meaning of freedom was gradual.*

GALINA: Yes, we first left the USSR with the intention of staying abroad for three years, perhaps four or five. Rostropovich and I felt that the Kremlin let us go because we had become a nuisance on account of the Solzhenitsyn affair. We thought that during the years of our absence something might change in the Soviet government's attitude to us; but we had every intention of going back. We lived, therefore, in the consciousness that we would return—which kept me worried. The prospect of re-entering the Soviet system was paralysing.

In 1978, however, we were deprived of our citizenship. A terrible weight I had carried all my life was suddenly lifted. I felt I was being born again. The Moloch had released me. At last I was free!

# 4. A Double Life at Home & Abroad



*YOU SAID THE operatic stage was your real life, your life of freedom—off-stage you were just going through the motions of living. Did audiences matter—whether you were singing in the Bolshoi or in the touring operetta company of Mark Ruben?*

GALINA: Not at all. Once I was on the stage the public became unimportant to me. I lived in a self-contained world. Everything I had thought and felt suddenly found their appointed places in the imaginative world I was creating. Everything that had been locked up in my sham existence broke through into the real life of music. It was a matter of indifference to me who was sitting in the auditorium. The stage was my pulpit. I felt I was addressing the world.

*—Wasn't so much "voluntarism" something that would worry the authorities—the "holy fool" syndrome again?*

GALINA: Our repertoire was, of course, strictly controlled. Frequently I had to sing parts I hated and despised.

*—Did you apply the same professional skills and enthusiasms to these unwanted parts as you did to "Fidelio" or "Aida"?*

GALINA: This might surprise you: yes, I did. Often I had to appear in some ghastly Soviet opera—Muradeli's *October* or Derzhinsky's *The Fate of Man*—where the music was poor and the propaganda worse. But I was forced to sing or else I would not be allowed to appear in the parts I loved, or to go abroad. But once on stage, artistic pride and perfectionism took over, and I sang the propagandistic roles with the same care and conviction as I sang the roles I respected and loved, and had myself chosen.

This can, of course, be very confusing for the listener and indeed for the artist because, let's face it, singing in a "Soviet opera" means working for the Soviet state and selling yourself as a musician.

*—Was there any way of avoiding such appearances?*

GALINA: No, there was nothing we could do. Suppose you were told to sing in some cantata dedicated to Stalin. Well, once you accepted the fact that you had to sing it, you couldn't do it *badly*. Certainly *I* couldn't. I put everything I had into the part, trying to turn bad music into something acceptable to the listener. Rostropovich, too, had this problem. He had to perform a lot of rubbish for the greater glory of the Soviet system. So had Oistrakh. They hated it but

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did it, and did it with the artistry unique to their genius. They couldn't give less than their best.

*—I understand the dilemma. Yet, with all due respect, wasn't it a little difficult for an artist of your temperament to praise, for example, the humanity of Stalin when your father was doing ten years in Siberia under Article 58?*

GALINA: Of course it was. It was awful. I tried to get out of these commitments whenever I could, but frequently I was compelled to go along. Muradeli's *October* is one good example. The principal character in this opera is Lenin, and *October* was to be staged to mark some anniversary. Ekaterina Furtseva herself came along to persuade me. "Galina, I implore you, please cooperate. You'll only have to appear in the first two or three performances, then we'll give the part to an understudy. . . ."

I knew they wouldn't put me in prison if I refused but I also knew that I would never be able to go abroad again. So in 1964 I sang Marina in Muradeli's opera. The words I was made to sing made me quite sick. Those were the most shameful hours of my career. I did only a few performances, but they marked me for life.

*—What did you say to your husband after such performances?*

GALINA: I was emptied of feeling, but I knew I had to do what I did; this was our life—Soviet life.

*—It must have been equally difficult for you to represent "Soviet" music in the Western world, as you often had to. Western critics frequently praised the great "Soviet" singer in you and, by implication, the society that had nurtured your art. How did you feel about such praise?*

GALINA: I ascribed it to the insensitivity of some of these critics or their political bias. Of course, as I said, you can never do less than give your best. Whether you appear to the outside world as "Soviet" or Russian makes no difference. In any case, we had been trained to go to these foreign countries the way soldiers are trained to go to war and conquer. We were told we were entering a hostile, capitalist environment—our job was to resist the allurements of the enemy and bring honour to the USSR. We also brought in a lot of hard currency.

*—Did you feel on these occasions that you were a Soviet, a Russian, or a Soviet-Russian singer?*

GALINA: I never felt for a moment that I was representing Soviet culture. It was *Russian* culture I was representing. My country is *Russia*, not the Soviet Union. I do not agree with those émigrés who insist that Russia is one thing, the Soviet Union another. Where has Russia gone? Has it evaporated? All we can say is: what we now have in that part of the world is "Russia under Soviet rule", but the essential Russianness of the people is untouched. It was Russia under the Mongol yoke and it is Russia today.

*—Do you recognise the legitimacy of the phrase "Soviet people"?*

GALINA: No, I don't. People who live in Russia are Russian people. There are no "Soviet people" to be found anywhere, except in the pages of "Soviet literature".

YOUR LIFE AS AN ARTIST ABROAD *was difficult enough. But it must have been even more difficult for someone like Shostakovich who had to represent, under Stalin's personal orders, Soviet culture at the "Cultural and Scientific Congress for World Peace" in New York, because it was required of him not only to conduct his music but to make statements and give interviews on behalf of the Soviet Union.*

GALINA: Shostakovich was aware that he was doing a distasteful thing. But Stalin promised that Prokofieff's, Khachaturian's, Shebalin's music (as well as Shostakovich's own) would be performed again if Shostakovich agreed. These had been proscribed as "formalist" by the censors—and Shostakovich gave in. In any case, he had to leave his wife behind as a hostage. We all had to leave hostages behind when we travelled abroad.

*—You relate in your book a particularly telling incident—Rostropovich's appearance in the Royal Albert Hall in London on 21 August 1968, the day Soviet troops occupied Czechoslovakia and suppressed the Prague reform movement. This must have made a terrible demand on his, and your, sense of belonging. . . .*

GALINA: It did! Especially as Rostropovich was playing Dvořák's Cello Concerto, of all things, in the framework of a Festival of *Soviet* Art! There could not have been a more ironic coincidence. There were demonstrations against the Soviet invasion outside the Albert Hall before the concert began and more was to come when the Soviet symphony orchestra entered the hall. There was whistling, shouting, stamping of feet. Some cried "Fascists, go home". You can imagine how we both felt. We were appalled by what our government had done, but at the same time Rostropovich had to give his best before a foreign audience. It was a terrible trial.

*—I was moved by this passage. You write in your book:*

> **"Slava was pale, and stood as if on an executioner's block, taking on himself the shame of his government. . . . Dvořák's music poured forth like a requiem for the Czech people. . . . Rapt, the audience listened to the confession of that great artist as he merged himself through Dvořák's music with the very soul of the Czech people, suffering with them, playing for them, asking their forgiveness."**

*It takes a sensitive man and a sensitive woman to feel the need to do penance through their art for a government they detest.*

GALINA: What took great courage was for Slava to go

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through with the performance. As soon as the last sounds died away I rushed backstage. I found him waiting for me, trembling, with tears in his eyes. We left at once. Outside the crowd silently parted to allow us to pass. Without looking left or right, we went to our car. Somehow we felt we were criminals ourselves.

*—Were there also voices of sympathy for the plight some of your London audience must have suspected Rostropovich was undergoing?*

GALINA: Yes, a few individuals—not too many—shouted that the artists were not to blame for the suppression of Czechoslovakia.

But there was one man who got up before the cello concerto could begin and held up proceedings by repeatedly declaiming "*Long Live Casals!*" and then walked out. At the time neither Rostropovich nor I understood the point he was trying to make. But some ten years later, after we had lost our Soviet citizenship, we received a letter from the same man and that explained it. The point he had tried to make in the Albert Hall in London was that if Casals had the courage to emigrate from Franco's Spain because he would not subject his art to the glorification of fascism—so should Rostropovich dissociate himself from the Soviet system of oppression. In the meantime he would not listen to Rostropovich's playing.

*—What did he actually say in his letter?*

GALINA: He wrote that he understood the great difficulties Soviet artists had to face when playing abroad, but now that Slava was happily released from the bondage of the Soviet state, he would like to welcome him in the West and apologised for the disturbance.

*—An instructive episode. . . .*

GALINA: The sort of thing you expect to happen to artists from totalitarian societies.

I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL *in passing moral judgment on artists who cooperate with totalitarian governments. It is probably right to demand that outstanding people like Casals and Rostropovich should stand up and be counted because they are symbols to their nations. A Thomas Mann, say, who might betray European humanism by underwriting Hitler's* Reich *would be (if any such thing could be imagined) a traitor of a particularly reprehensible sort. But can we demand so heroic a stance from the average musician or poet—people who represent nothing to the outside world and whose defection would therefore go unnoticed in Paris, London, or New York?*

GALINA: A certain conformism under the Soviet régime is inevitable for almost everyone in that society, including the most powerful. The sheer struggle for material survival demands that, in public at least, Soviet taboos and shibboleths must be respected.

The real problem is the one we have already touched on: unfreedom breeds unfreedom. Somewhere the vicious circle has to be broken, and that can only be done by breaking down the intellectual barriers of the Soviet system and offering the people the whole panorama of truthful information. Those of us who could travel abroad soon became conscious of alternative ways of seeing the world and alternative ways of living. That seems to me to be the key to freedom in the Soviet Union, and that is where Western broadcasts can play a decisive part provided they put the emphasis on Soviet *domestic* matters, for that is where we are most deprived.

*Of course* we cannot ask that the ordinary man or woman should display great feats of heroism. But we can and must expect decency and civility from everyone, and especially from artists, because their claim to public respect derives from their uncommon sensitivity. And what kind of an uncommon sensitivity is it that does not recognise injustice and brutality when these stare them in the face?

## 5. The "Ideology" of Britten's "War Requiem"

IT IS PROBABLY *as interesting to look at the types of music you were not allowed to sing as those you were made to.*

*Benjamin Britten wrote his "War Requiem" specifically with yourself in mind for the soprano part. He had heard you sing and was persuaded that yours was the kind of tone and musical commitment he was looking for. Yet, when the "War Requiem" was finished and the rehearsals began, you were not allowed to leave the Soviet Union to sing the part. Britten pleaded with the Soviet authorities, but to no avail.*[4]

*The "War Requiem" was a plea for reconciliation and peace. Britten had written it in memory of the dead of the First World War. He combined in his text words of the traditional requiem mass with the poetry of Wilfred Owen:*

**My subject is War, and the Pity of War.**
**The poetry is in the pity.**
**All a poet can do today is warn.**

*Why did a government that was dedicating the whole machinery of its international propaganda to "Peace" not allow you to sing in Britten's "Requiem"?*

[4] Galina Vishnevskaya was eventually allowed to appear in a performance of the *War Requiem* in the Royal Albert Hall in London, with Benjamin Britten conducting and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Peter Pears in the baritone and tenor parts. A recording was subsequently made (Decca, set 252-3).

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GALINA: I tell the story in my memoirs, but let me briefly recount it all the same.

The Soviet Government is for peace, but not for any kind of peace. It is for *Soviet* peace. I will not explain what sort of peace that is because we are all familiar with its meaning. You see, Britten's *Requiem* was going to be given its first performance at the ceremonial reconsecration of Coventry Cathedral. And *there* was the rub! Coventry had been destroyed by the *Luftwaffe* and was later rebuilt with West German money. Our leaders didn't like that. When I went to see Ekaterina Furtseva, our corrupt Minister of Culture, she explained to me that the ruined Cathedral ought to have been left to stand as "a monument to the horrors of fascism" so that people the world over would remember.

My own attitude must have struck Furtseva as very naive and undialectical because I said: if the Germans had offered to pay for the reconstruction of a cathedral they had destroyed, that seemed to me very sensible, for they were trying to undo a great wrong. How could that be used to justify the Soviet Government's refusal to permit me to sing in Coventry? Weren't we on the side of peace and international brotherhood?

*—Did she reply?*

GALINA: No, I thought she either did not have a convincing answer or was too ashamed to give it to me. In any case, she seemed to be under orders that no Soviet singer was to appear at the Coventry performance of Britten's *Requiem*. And none did.

*—What is your own explanation of the ban?*

GALINA: Britten's *Requiem* is a profound and moving warning against the futility of war—any war. The Soviet régime is not against *every* kind of war. It supports what it is pleased to call "wars of national liberation", "just" wars, wars to defeat imperialism, and the like. It supports wars of its own choosing, but no other. Britten's *Requiem* did not fit in with the Soviet concepts of war and peace.

Worse, the reconsecration of the Cathedral was threatening to undo some of the bitterness between the German and British peoples, and that could not be to the Communist advantage. The Soviet ambition was to keep the British and Germans hating one another. How could that be achieved with Galina Vishnevskaya of the Bolshoi Theatre praying for "rest eternal" and "light eternal" to "shine upon the souls"[5] of all the fallen, fascists and anti-fascists alike? It was not to be.

Then there was another ideological snag. The Soviet Government keeps the public in a state of permanent mobilisation. "Peace" is a Soviet prerogative—"war" threatens to come from the Western side only. The spectacle of the British and Germans making it up under the sign of the cross *with Soviet support* would have run against the spirit of the Soviet siege mentality and morally disarmed all those millions of young Soviet men and women who are being daily indoctrinated that they must always be prepared to go to war. In any case, anti-war propaganda is, in the Soviet view, a Soviet monopoly. Coventry was threatening to break it.

*—One is constantly surprised by the lack of sophistication of Soviet propaganda. A Soviet presence in Coventry in the shape of so splendid an artist as yourself would have been of much greater benefit to the Soviet "peace image" in Western society than Moscow's petulant refusal to let you sing. Luckily for us, the constraints of Soviet ideology make much of Soviet efforts in "public diplomacy" stillborn or limping.*

GALINA: There is only so much you can do with Soviet propaganda. The idea of forgiveness, for example, is outside the Soviet frame of thinking. The system is still run on Lenin's despicable principle "*Who/Whom*": either you vanquish your enemies or you're vanquished by them. Social tranquillity is a deception—lasting peace between antagonistic societies is a mirage—and so on. Now, Britten's *Requiem* is an act of forgiveness, an act of turning the other cheek, an act of loving your enemies. It is a Christian mass interlaced with the agonised poetry of Wilfred Owen. It just wasn't in line with Soviet hate-mongering.

ARE WE IN THE WEST *doing enough to make the world aware that the Soviet leadership needs this hate-filled atmosphere as the precondition of its own and the system's survival?*

GALINA: No, you are not. Most people in the West do not realise that this is the basic motivation of the Soviet state and Soviet society. How this can be, 69 years after the Bolshevik revolution, after Lenin, Stalin, the Gulag and Solzhenitsyn—I cannot quite understand.

*—Shostakovich makes some bitter comments about those misguided "great humanists" (André Malraux, George Bernard Shaw, Lion Feuchtwanger, Paul Robeson) who went to look at Stalin's Russia and came back to the West with praise on their lips for the new civilisation: "I've seen the future and it works."*

GALINA: There aren't too many of those left nowadays because the Soviet system is just too repulsive, but the media are doing their bit—whether out of bias or sheer ignorance, I cannot tell. The results are not dissimilar.

*—About 18 months ago I was asked after a lecture whether I thought Ronald Reagan had grossly overstated his case when he called the Soviet Union a "focus of evil". I said: "Not really. . . . The Soviet system is built on the idea of the class struggle and class hatred. When you appoint envy and hatred as the governing principles of your society, you appoint a great evil as your taskmaster." Would you agree?*

[5] "*Requiem eternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis. . . .*"

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GALINA: I would say this: if a shared Christianity was not enough to stop monarchs from doing very unchristian things to one another through the centuries, we can imagine—indeed, we can see—what the principle of hatred, elevated to the governing creed of one of the world's most powerful countries, will do to the lives of all of us.

*—And yet, by a strange perversion of values, the Soviets have tried to fashion Lenin and the institutionalised hatreds he spread around him into an object of love. Whether this is a hangover from Czarism need not concern us here, but what is remarkable is that it exists and plays a practical part in Soviet life. Towards the end of your memoirs you tell us that on a trip to Austria you and Rostropovich had a long conversation with Vladimir Semyonov, an educated "liberal" who was then the head of the Soviet delegation to the Arms Control conference in Vienna.*

GALINA: Yes, a man of books, some learning, and sophisticated tastes.

YOU WANTED TO INTERVENE *on behalf of Solzhenitsyn. You wanted to have the hounding of Solzhenitsyn stopped. After "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" and some short stories, the censors had banned everything Solzhenitsyn had written. He was being slandered in the press and was unable to defend himself. Could Semyonov help? But Semyonov, far from being helpful, surprised you with a pointed question: "But does he love Lenin?" As you write in your memoirs:*

> **"Had I heard right? I had been prepared to expect almost anything from him, but not such an idiotic question.**
>
> **'What?', I asked, 'Does he love Lenin?'**
>
> **I went numb. And as in a dream, I heard the drone of that self-righteous voice continue: 'S-o-o-o! You're not saying anything! That's it then! He doesn't love Lenin. . . .'"**

GALINA: Can you imagine? Semyonov expecting Solzhenitsyn to "love" Lenin after Solzhenitsyn had spent ten years in the Gulag?!

*—I share your indignation, but personally I would have been less shocked than you were, for I suspect all the poor Ambassador was trying to convey to you was: "But are you sure Solzhenitsyn is one of us?"*

*What I do find a little surprising is that a relatively enlightened man of the Soviet Establishment should have used the word "love" in talking about Lenin to other members of the Establishment, because that is what you were in those days. He could have said: "But are you persuaded that Solzhenitsyn is not hostile to the whole Soviet system?" or "Are you sure he is not going to pull the rug from under all of us?"—or words to that effect. But he didn't. Even in the intimacy of the Vienna hotel bar where you were talking to him, he stuck to the devotional incantation "But does he love Lenin?" It is this mantra that fascinates, because it shows that the Soviet leaders themselves do not quite know how to handle Lenin's principle of hatred without, that is, giving it another name.*

*And I can see their problem. It was Lenin who laid it down in 1915:*

> **"We must hate—hatred is the basis of Communism. Children must be taught to hate their parents if these are not Communists. . . . Children should be present at executions and should rejoice in the death of the enemies of the proletariat."**[6]

*In the 1970s this was not a very usable quotation. Vladimir Semyonov could hardly have asked: "But does Solzhenitsyn agree with Lenin's principle of universal hatred on which our title to rule rests?" He simply asked: "But does he love Lenin?"—Lenin the founding father, Lenin the seer, Lenin the demi-god.*

GALINA: What shocked us in Semyonov was that all of his civility and sophistication was a veneer. When put to the test it peeled off, and you were left face to face with a Party functionary. I did not examine his reaction as carefully as you have just done, and you may well be right. My reaction was one of fury that a man we suspected to be more open-minded than most should, after our cautious and confidential approach to him, come out with an expression of crude and indeed childish propaganda. I came to the conclusion that his real self *was* the self he displayed to us as an *apparatchik*. Or else he was so frightened of doing anything on behalf of Solzhenitsyn (because he must have been aware of some decision higher up in Moscow) that he fell back on a cliché as a device for protecting himself against us. Whichever it was, he gave us a useful lesson in what we could expect, even from "liberals" in the Moscow Establishment.

*© 1986 Galina Vishnevskaya & George Urban*

*(A concluding instalment will be published next month)*

[6] V. I. Lenin, "Defeat of One's Own Government in Imperialist War" (1915), in *Selected Works*, Vol. 5 (New York, 1938), p. 147.

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# *Michael Bird*

# *Churchgoing*

NORMALLY HE WOULD HAVE been stealing glances at his wrist-watch. He could even hear it ticking, which was strange, since so many other noises might, up there on the open hillside, compete for attention. He listened; but setting aside rivalry from the crickets' on-and-off tired whirring, what he heard most distinctly was still the tiny, frenetic pace of the watch. Too fast!

Normally, even so, he would have checked the time. But here he lacked, for some reason, the faintest desire to find out. The hours today had nothing to tell him. At least, not until well after nightfall. "Half-nine, at the very latest. I have to get up in the morning!" he had answered Frances's enquiry as he stood towelling the crockery after lunch. And of course the evening service at six. That was the next item on their weekend agenda. He lay back, inhaling vague feelings of self-content and delighted passivity like a full, clean breath. The grass crumpled under his head and he seemed to hear the insects' rustling pathways close to his ears. Tall grasses reared balancing before him as though he himself were insect-sized. The few swathed clouds in the peaceful September sky he judged to be at an immense altitude where the cold air was spinning them to ice crystals. He tried to discern cloud-shapes, but his mind, too lulled, too slack, wouldn't rise to the bait. "They are just a lovely abstract pattern", he persuaded himself, without much satisfaction.

The parched, fragrant grass made him think forward to evening service and the harvest supper that was to follow. Almost the instant of his arrival, late on Friday, Frances had wanted him to stroll across to the church with her. She had her offerings to deliver. They could arrange them together, she suggested, showing him: three small loaves, a lavish bunch of bronze-coloured chrysanthemums; "And these are the very, very last of my courgettes." She snuggled three obese green marrows into the trug. "Did you really grow those?" He knew she took gladly to gardening compliments and was about to extract appreciatively one of the impressive vegetables when a coarse joke jumped through his mind. It almost made him feel guilty: anything like that, he was sure, would appal Frances, and he had learnt to be careful. He made fewer mistakes now, although it amused him to think of the sharp words he had called forth later on account of his inadvertently rolling a cigarette while he waited in the dark side-aisle for her to finish her ministrations.

This was a measure of how seriously she took her rituals. And even though he laughed, a little awkwardly, to himself, he felt somehow that he had captured a rarity. He wanted more than ever to know from inside the secret of her remarkable, determined approach to everything; the curious, independent life, her plan to educate her own children, her knack of turning upwards, backwards, inwards—any direction but his own vulgar ambitious forwards—in search of her meanings. Even her bouquets of garden blooms spilled wide in their vases with a romantic conviction all their own, and he hankered for wherever it was this came from. Such a source was nowhere to be found in his own vagrant international boyhood, strung like a sailor's hammock between the draughty Manchester school and his father's freelancing "bases".

He brought to mind with pleasure the cool stone aisle and grainy evening light in the church. There had been a nice smell: apples, floor-polish, books; cold serene stone. The sunlight colour-pencilled through the west window illuminated decorative garden vegetables and waxy fruit painstakingly heaped in angles of the stonework. The rich sheaves of corn especially had an exotic, foreign air, like some antique picture come to life.

He swung lazily over. When he lifted his head, there was Frances, down below. Not far away on the slope, but she appeared dwarfed by a strong young tree that had managed to root in among the broken flints and dry, chalky soil. She was kneeling, pulling up the little girl's knickers, buttoning. The child looked up uncertainly, apparently expecting some sign. So he waved, scrambling upright. Time they were on their way.

"Edmund!" Frances called in her far-carrying voice. "Edmund. We're going home!"

Her son was over by the earthworks, walking slowly in their direction. It was impossible to tell whether he had heard. With broad, intent, thoughtful swipes and thrusts he swished a lithe branch he had found.

From the niche near the top of the hill Richard took this all in. While he observed the boy, each detail, every movement, spoke distinctly as a voice of Frances's son's feelings towards him. And something unpleasantly furtive, which he could not help, wormed



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round inside himself in answer. It told him that, however Frances might love, need, accept him, he remained from this boy's point of view an extraneous character, a species of joke nonentity in their family drama. Not the first, nor quite possibly the last to enjoy such a role. All the same, he made an effort to compensate; always friendly and as ready as he could make himself to indulge Edmund, though he often wondered what reports he made to his father on those sacred second Thursdays of every month. From time to time, also, Richard experienced, though he did not like to remember, humiliating dreams in which the boy figured.

"Hurry *up* will you, Edmund. Or you'll make us all late."

The tree-echo lifted Frances's voice as though, out of sight, she were sinking deep into a resonant, mystical forest of fairy story. He walked quickly to join her.

The return drive downhill soon brought them out on to the Roman road and from this point the countryside opened into a plain. Glasshouses flashed in the distance and a little local train was traversing the flatlands as though it had escaped its rails to career determinedly away across the fields. On the tinted shadow of the passenger-seats the two children sat quietly. The old-fashioned-looking clothes in which Frances preferred to dress them, and something altogether unmodern in the children themselves, showed out of place against the sheeny nap of new upholstery.

The road stretched grey and tapelike. Shreds of low mist had already begun to form in places, just above the surface, although the sky overhead reached clear and bright. The speedometer pointer moved round until Frances couldn't help asking, mightn't he slow down? He complied, though at the snail's pace she favoured he felt ridiculous; they might as well just be walking on the long, straight road, constantly being overtaken. At last came their turning; the humpback bridge over the branch-line, then the four red-brick chimneys, peeping above a row of pollarded limes, revealed the farm just beyond.

Not that the buildings called Pond Farm actually had a farm belonging to them. To the old, warreny house remained only the brick-paved yard, an orchard and long views across pasture and over a large, disappointing arable field devoid of trees. On rising ground at the top of the lane (postal address Claggers Lane, a name of veiled but authentic rural pedigree) the new bungalows shone behind cypress hedges not yet tall enough to conceal the occasional bald or snowy head moving around like a fairground target in one or other of the generously appointed garden plots. Sometimes the heads held still, apparently scrutinising the picture-book prospect of which Frances's house formed the focal point. Arching lawn-sprayers in summer, in autumn smoke from bonfires offered the only other signs of life. Frances disparaged the manic tidiness of the retirement houses, as she did anything "petty". Her own garden she liked to remain "natural"; but she seemed able to conjure flowers or cooking herbs from its recesses at almost any time of year.

True, he had yet to see the place in winter. And it was hard to believe, as he perched outside the scullery door and allowed the familiar clasp of a rusty iron beetle to ease him free of his wellingtons, that it was a mere seven months since he had first entered its precincts. Only a little more since, on one of her infrequent visits to his place of work, her publisher (the cookbook sales were sloping off now, but had, as she said, "seen her through"), he had met Frances.

IF NOW HE POSSESSED a home, he reflected, where else could it be? Impossible to avoid the realisation that during the working week his own Islington apartment had begun to induce a restless, futile sensation. On dreary days the thief-bars fitted by the developer turned it into an expensive prison.

When friends or associates he invited back for a drink noticed his photo of Frances—hair down, very much herself, on the iron bench under the apple blossom during an early heat-wave that had taken everyone by surprise—they usually professed admiring interest. But soon he would be annoyed to find them joking about this *Country Life* life of his, and he grew bored anticipating their knowing "ahs" when he mentioned her husband's surname. Knowingness, of any kind, came increasingly to affect him as vulgar, like the other men's incessant shop-talk, and his evenings gradually became empty of company.

Instead, he was reading all kinds of things; mostly books that Frances lent him, memoirs and novels. Naturally, she wanted no truck with feminist literature: "It puzzles me really. What is it they're after, do you imagine? Men and women can't, after all, *be* the same, whatever they'd prefer to appear." In any case, as Frances pointed out, when it was a question of writing, women came out on top, without any needing to cook the books: George Eliot, Mrs Gaskell, her beloved Jane Austen, right down to the first edition Beatrix Potters on the nursery shelves.

He felt that his outlook was widening, not shrinking; that his new, thoughtful, literary evenings alone, these weekends together, were an introduction, in so many ways, though not as his friends insinuated. An introduction? A revelation, truth to tell, of so much previously unvisited in his life. Nature, for one example. He used not to know the first thing about all the various plants and birds. If someone had asked him he'd probably have said that there were really no *wild* animals in Britain. When he was at work the changing light at different times of day and even the weather could pass without notice. And now, through Frances, he was learning to cherish these things, and threw himself into all the rituals of country life with a late convert's zealousness. That Sunday morning he had

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scythed under the trees in the orchard; his shoulders still ached from the exertion, his palms were raw and stiff. Instructing him also were all the things—the rooms, the furniture, little special objects, even the kitchen utensils—with which Frances surrounded herself. As a kind of reciprocation, and despite her insistence that her playing was "shameful", he now made a point of actively encouraging her at least once during their weekends to address herself to the old piano, an early Broadwood.

"Any old tune will do for me."

"It will have to!" she would answer, testing a Mozart arrangement from one of the albums on the creaking keyboard. When the children were old enough they would have a family recorder consort, and he must study to play the bass line, she said.

Oddest of all his newly-accrued habits over these months was going to church. Not going, simply, but the compulsion; he felt drawn by the decorum, the beauty of quietly intoned services in the ancient building. On Sundays he had come to put off his departure until after evensong. Driving homewards past the big reservoir near Haywards Heath, summer light hanging late in the sky, the rhythmical phrases of ritual would reiterate soothingly in his head. It was only a pity that, when everyone stood for the hymns and psalms, he was still too self-conscious. But Frances beside him had a fine voice, and it had to be regretted now that, as a girl at school, she had thrown over her singing lessons.

AFTER TEA, when the children had been set free in the orchard, he sat smoking, elbows wide on the broad scrubbed table. Before him in the low-slanted flattering sunlight ranged a still life of crumby plates, buttered knives and the stoneware mugs where tea-dregs cooled and mantled. A fly walked over the sugar and he blew smoke at it, as a deterrent. Frances lit a cigarette from his packet and began to stroll, in her leisurely way, round the room, with her free hand gathering up tea-debris and making other minor adjustments as they occurred to her.

The door stood open. Across the yard they both watched the branches of a giant old apple tree springing maniacally. Apples thudded to the ground, splashed into the nettles beneath. A box or something on the end of an orange nylon cord dipped, airborne, then vanished with slow levitation into the foliage. Frances was saying she must take a bath and change. "Something fresher" meant some considered item most appropriate for harvest, or for the rope of amber he had cleverly found her in Camden Passage on his way home one afternoon. "Can I leave you to get the children ready? About a quarter of an hour, darling. They must wash their hands." She could be heard climbing the steep, boxed-in servants' stairs. "I'll be up soon", he called, but stepped out into the yard to finish his cigarette. Several cats at once ran up to him in expectation of food. They purred ingratiatingly, rubbed up against his ankles and trotted after as he walked away, stooping as he went under the low boughs in the orchard.

The little girl was running about under the tree, her smock showing pale in the shade, like an illustration from a book, as though the twentieth century were still round the corner and might never arrive. She must have seen him, because she stopped doing whatever it was and stared. He tried to think how big he must seem to her, with his large, blistered, man's hands and thick man's body. He felt like a dinosaur, some bypassed creature that could not adapt to the world. Where was the boy?

"Edmund?" he called.

The boy saw him emerge from the house, pause, lance a cigarette-butt in among the yellowing broad-bean stalks; saw him look up, quizzing the impenetrable leafage where he crouched and held the rope steady. Sunlight glittered on the man's round spectacles whenever his head moved. Up, down; two silver coins. He heard his own name and remained silent, in hiding.

"Edmund's in the tree. I can't climb the tree though", his sister was explaining at the other end of the rope.

"You're too little."

"I'm too little to climb the tree", she echoed, as she always did the things people said to her.

"Load coming up!" the man's voice now, and a signal tug on the rope. He hauled. The basket that at last emerged was filled with unripe apples.

"Get some sticks!" he shouted down. "I want some long sticks."

THE BELL RANG OUT for evensong. From his tree Edmund viewed wide across water-meadow to the square-set Norman church and its bank of dark yews whose shadow began to invade the luminous field below. The single bell-note echoed in the farm's enclosed yard. It gave the illusion of a clear double ring; a circling, hypnotic sound. Already he saw people on the narrow path to the church. It was made out of tombstones. He knew—those that you could still read—the strange names in the stones; husbands, wives, children younger than he was. He also knew the names of the people on the path, and the names of their mythical sons and daughters, whom they sometimes talked about to his mother, but whom he never saw. They were swallowed up in the round arch where they would walk past the notice someone had pinned up saying "God is Here to Greet You." Like the other notices it was pierced with rings of rust where the drawing-pins had been moved.

Hostile and pointless, the single clear-tolling bell meant an assault. The boy raised his curved stump of broken branch, imagined the cloudlets of smoke—one

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from the mouth, one from the flintlock's pan—and the detonation. He made himself see one of the church-bound figures fall on the path and then, as he continued, amid acrid gunsmoke and the muffling leaves, to fire shot after shot, he imagined the members of the choir running out, distinct in their white surplices and carrying whatever they could lay their hands on; the embroidered banners from the vestry, the churchwardens' staves, the medieval tilting helm. When he looked down he saw below their upturned faces, their glittering hooks and scythes, the preparation of scaling ladders. Beside him, suspended in his own pulley arrangement, hung the E.II R. coronation biscuit-tin. The cache of fine sand which had been gathered as gunpowder became as he tipped it out a stream of molten lead.

"Watch what you're doing up there!" ricocheted Richard's voice. "Come down. It's time to come down now."

Edmund watched carefully between the branches, picking out the red shoes and then, as though part of a different body, the round spectacles, transparent this time. Did those eyes see him? He tried to make sure before moving.

"Come down now." A rough tug at the rope set the branch swaying, nearly tipped him off. "Edmund, your mother wants you in now, O.K.?"

"No!" he was suddenly possessed to shout. "I'm not coming down. I'm staying here. I can stay up here as long as I like."

An indeterminate rustling. Silence.

"Look—"

"No!" he shouted. "I can stay here if I want. I'm not going to stinking church."

Like a whiff of smoke he sensed the movement of anger billow towards him through the dense branches crowded with fruit. It elated him. High on his tower the alarm bell rang and rang and he threw the heavy branch-stump snagging down. Snatched cannon-shot of small, hard apples followed, aimlessly crashing through the leaves.

Beneath the boy's perch the tree twitched while Richard heaved himself up. His hair, even his beard became tangled with bits of twig and dead leaf. Powdery green mould rubbed off everywhere on his clothes. Reaching out, he caught Edmund's wrist hard.

"Come down." His voice strained unevenly towards reasonableness. "You don't want to make us all late, do you? Your mother would be upset, you know that?"

So close to the boy's face he saw the swift changes: pain, fear, contempt. There was an odd, unreadable smile; but instantly there were real tears. Watching them well and fall he felt clumsy, despicable.

"Did I hurt you? I didn't mean it."

The next thing, he had taken the blow full on his face. In his mouth was the taste of dirty, scuffed shoe mixed with the iron taste of his blood. His lower jaw was numbed, his lip swelling. It took some while to swing himself down and by the time he reached ground-level the boy had disappeared. He heard the braying hinges of the gate by the coal-shed, the clatter as it shut. A moment after, the vivid, slithering shriek of tyres and the impact's vague, gritty thud brought him running into the lane. The blood in his mouth tasted like a premonition.

FULL GOLDEN evening light beamed intensely from the polished wing of a car that had slewed into the hedge. He cast about stupidly for the dead boy. Under the wheels, or perhaps the collision had thrown him somewhere, along the hedgerow, over into the field? There was no sign of him near the vehicle. An elderly man extricating himself from the driver's seat straightened, pulling back his shoulders. On the passenger side a woman craned indistinctly forward behind the windscreen.

"Look here, old man—" the driver was addressing him, close to his face. "This road's a hell of a place for a child to be running wild in."

Distracted, Richard's gaze travelled the flat, open ground beyond the mauled hedgerow, attentive to any movement. Just out of reach of the dimming pheasant woods he caught sight of the boy, still running. The bullocks in the field were looking up. A few followed, clustering, curious, then lost interest.

"Look here, really, old man—" He recognised the parishioner in the smart dove-grey suit. A judge, with a curious Christian name: Kennet? Kenelm. They had been introduced at Sunday drinks on one of his weekends. Now he watched him licking a forefinger, fussily rubbing at some scratch in the paintwork, still whitish around the jowls. His wife, imprisoned by the gearstick, was pushing at the passenger door. It had been buckled in some way. Her head was half out, trying to say something.

"It was bloody close, you know", the old man repeated, fussing, wanting to conceal the distress with which his hands continued to shake, and evidently anxious to come to some agreement about the accident that would set him at liberty to drive on. Already the first harvest hymn was in the still air, sounding at a distance more like the mumbling of insects than human throats. Sputtering of water in the drain signalled the end of Frances's bath. Perhaps she had been listening to the radio with the volume up and hadn't heard? Across the field the mist was whitening, soft and motionless, while Richard tried to explain that it was all right, it wasn't the man's fault; "I must go after him." He opened his mouth to loud-hail the boy when an unpleasant sensation in his jaw stopped him. Putting his hand up he drew out, like a miniature portentous ivory charm, an unwelcome talisman, the uprooted tooth.

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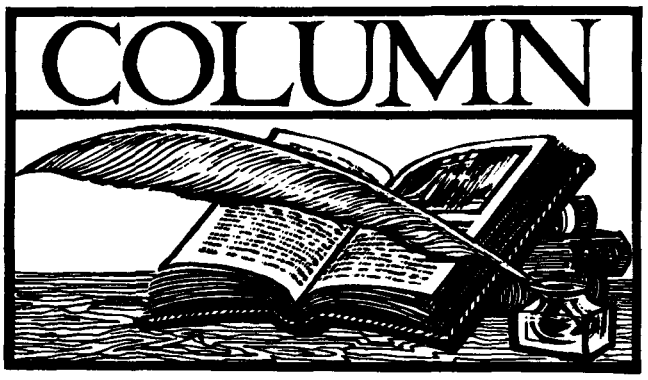


LISTENERS to BBC Radio-4 may still remember and lament an abrasive programme called *Checkpoint* which used to investigate injustice and fraud. It was taken off some time ago, making way for something more anodyne, allegedly because its presenter wanted a change. Others believed that the BBC had grown nervous after another of its consumer programmes, on television, had incurred a colossal libel bill. Perhaps in reality the formula had become stale. It's certainly been parodied, lethally, by a recent comedy show.

The weekly broadcast usually began with words from the presenter Roger Cook, a burly and determined New Zealander with pugnacious relish in his voice. He'd pinpoint the strange activities, unusual business behaviour, or bizarre career of, say, the mysterious Ron Grifter, otherwise known as D'Arcy Chesham, Pierpoint Associates, or the Nirvana Banking Trust Ltd. These activities, we'd be told, had spelt financial disaster for a number of small investors, franchise-holders, or depositors of cash. One by one, the aggrieved victims would tell their tales—of houses re-mortgaged, life-savings lost for ever, nervous breakdowns, broken marriages, misery and despair. Then Cook would try to telephone the alleged culprit. "Thanatos Securities", the switchboard would answer: but Ron Grifter's extension would be engaged. Or he'd moved. Or no one had ever heard of him. Or the phone wouldn't answer at all. Very occasionally, a metallic-toned business partner would come on the line to decline all comment and tell Roger Cook to *bleep* off.

The scene was then set for the ritual confrontation. Cook and his sleeve microphone would lay siege to the imposing premises of Grifter & Co. After a contretemps with the outer office, Ron himself would be cornered, snarling, whining, or surprisingly plausible.

"I'm here to record an interview with you *now*", Roger Cook would warn him, and start to fling the leading questions: "How do you feel about ruining widows and orphans . . . exploiting the handicapped . . . misleading the blind?" When Grifter felt cajolery or bluster failing, he'd call in his heavies, and we'd hear thumps and crashes, with Cook's explanatory exclamations: "No, no, it won't do you any good to smash my recording machine." Now and then, the same scene would be enacted in the country, at Grifter Manor, with a distraught wife and dangerous growling dogs. Frequently, Cook suffered physical injury. We listeners lapped it up.

I miss the programme: it flourished for more than ten investigative years. But, towards the end, I too began to query its conventions. It wasn't so much the build-up to fisticuffs that bothered me. Every *corrida* has its rules. What began to stick in my craw were some of the sob stories. Not all—there were heartbreaking tales of real hardship. But, sometimes, the complainants sounded querulous, grungy people glad of a grievance; and sometimes their gullibility had clearly been fuelled by greed.

Often, Ron Grifter's scam would appeal to the lowest instincts: *Make Money in Your Spare Time with No Effort and No Risk!* Promises like this sold launderette franchises or salesmen's jobs; those who took them were frankly in search of something for nothing. They may have been naive to expect it; perhaps they'd never heard that there's no such thing as a free lunch (or a part-time job). The deal was none the less dubious—ethically as well as financially. What had they done, what did they propose to do, to deserve such rewards?

There's a pleasing continuity to the history of deception. The conjurer talks, makes striking gestures with his free hand, while the other works stealthily to perform the trick. The find-the-lady man employs a confederate to win against him and attract the suckers. The really successful beggar or borrower takes care to look rich. Incoming premiums finance extravagant payouts, to attract new premiums in their turn. The mechanism's been the same since the South Sea Bubble and before; but cupidity and laziness, on the part of the victims, connive with the trickster's dishonesty to keep the same old show on an ever more sophisticated road. And both parties to the transaction, the mountebank and the mutt alike, are on the trail of an unduly fast buck.

I THOUGHT OF THAT TRAIL a few weeks ago when I heard a cleric denouncing avarice. He'd been struck, as I had, by the huge queues at branches of Britain's Trustee Savings Bank (TSB), staking their claims for its first issue of shares. It was oversubscribed considerably—and no wonder, since the markets were expecting a premium of 60% on the initial price. To millions, this looked like money for nothing; and so they flocked in with their application forms and their cheques —the young, the old, the middle-class, the modest; the Indian immigrants, Irish housewives, supermarket check-out clerks and trainee managers; pensioners and young mothers; all sorts and conditions of men. Of course their purchases—if they got them—were far outweighed by those of the institutions, the banks and insurance companies and pension funds. But these too depend in large measure on what some condescendingly call the "small" men and women; so the bonanza, if there is one, is very widely spread.

Is that avarice, as defined by churchmen? There's certainly the hope of easy money; but this is surely common to most investment. It's less hard work to lend money to a promising firm than it is to write an article, build a house, or dig a hole in the road. And many who invest are thinking less of themselves than of their dependants. What perhaps shocked the complaining clergyman was the sheer scale of the gold rush. Too many people, behaving prudently, looked un-



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attractive. Does he feel uneasy when they snap up "special offers" in the shops?

Perhaps he does; and again I can feel some sympathy. My children, like me and my friends at their age, are keen players of Monopoly, that archetypal board game whose players buy property and extract rent, stumbling now and then on lucky "Chance" or "Community Chest" cards, and occasionally going to jail. The game's chief attraction, I've always thought, is not its cute little tokens—the dog, the shoe, the battleship, the flat-iron—or the roller-coaster careering from wealth to poverty and back again, but the eternal lure of fake money.

A friend of mine tells an implausible story about Monopoly money. In World War II, trying to buy supplies for his troops on some remote Asian island, he ran out of sterling and resorted to the fake cash from a Monopoly set being used on his naval transport. It was accepted eagerly. Years later, he went back as a civilian reporter—and found the Monopoly money still in use. While all other currencies had depreciated, the fake cash had kept its value, because no more had been printed. Milton Friedman would have cheered.

I was no teen-age monetarist; but what thrilled me about the game was actually handling large sums of what appeared to be specie. For a while, in artificial circumstances, one could think oneself rich—like a London house-owner sitting in a fortune, although unable to move. And it was no co-incidence that Monopoly had first flourished in the Depression years. It was a fireside game version of the New Deal.

As then, so now. When times are hard, money becomes important. In the 1950s when Italy was still emerging from De Sica style poverty, a Rome correspondent of Encounter remarked on how often he heard the shuffling rasp of money-talk: "*Cinquanta-cinque mila, trecento quaranta-cinque*. . . ." In Britain today, with the recession still lingering, we're bombarded not only by financial news, but by money offers and temptations of every sort.

As a journalist and a subscriber to magazines and charities, I seem to be on many address lists for junk mail. Makers of thermal underwear are constantly inviting me to take a coin, rub off a blob of grey plastic, and see if I've got three aces, or four stars, or a personal lucky number. If so, I can enter the lottery, without even ordering a flannelette nightie. The prize is usually a cheque to be handed over by some celebrity; would it be worth the cost of having one's grateful smile reproduced in the next catalogue? Alternatively, a publisher invites me to spot the ball—and I've actually won a pair of pen sets, his and hers, with a haphazard guess. A motoring organisation, likewise, tempts me to order *Secret Corners of Britain* (secret except to subscribers) by offering the chance to win a time-share apartment in the Balearics or *two* (his and hers again) identical cars. Meanwhile, every breakfast-time, a cornflakes packet vainly invites me to collect vouchers securing entry to a further lottery, this time offering a dream kitchen, for which there's no room in the house.

Is it avarice if we go in for these endless offers? How many people, top or otherwise, play the Portfolio "game" in the London *Times*? Their reasoning's elementary: there's no entrance fee, so why not give themselves a chance? If they fail, they've lost nothing but a few minutes' time; if they win, it's a total bonus. That's rational behaviour, not gold-rush fever on the part of money-mad lemmings.

What's a little more disturbing is the other side of, yes, the coin. The would-be vendors of thermal vests, do-it-yourself manuals, or motorists' guides might be expected to sell their wares on their merits. Instead, they set up "games" and other forms of draw, trying hard to make readers gloat with eager greed.

"Just think what you might do with £20,000", they begin: then, imagination fails them, and they come up with humdrum ambitions like reducing the mortgage or travelling round the world. No mention, in these chaste, encouraging colour brochures, of a binge to end all binges, a light aircraft, a motor-sailer, or a contract on the life of someone you hate. Still, as bribes go, these are effective. Just let's not forget that they are bribes.

All's fair, you may say, in love and commerce. Very well. But I begin to have more fellow-feeling with disapproving priests when I start getting similar offers from insurance companies. *Et tu*, Norwich Union? Well, maybe not: but some of your competitors are behaving oddly, to say the least.

Twice in the last week I've been offered a ten-year insurance policy, with fancy projections of how much my monthly contribution might net me if I, and the City, survive. There's nothing new in that. What does surprise me, in these latest prospectuses, is the promise of a clock radio or some other electric gizmo if I sign up within the allotted time.

This, surely, is the utterly ludicrous face of capitalism—soliciting loans with tawdry hardware, like a Levantine merchant offering coffee in a *souq*. Do those responsible really suppose that we're going to buy life insurance so as to secure an up-market transistor set? Or that being awakened by the news or music, thanks to our new possession, is going to increase our actuarial chances and postpone any policy claim?

I find either notion hard to swallow. Maybe the insurance companies are themselves the victims of plausible salesmen, off-loading clock radios as they obviously off-load tin ashtrays and plated mock-pearl brooches, those Mystery Gifts awarded by the underwear firm to anyone rash enough to compete in the draw.

The view, then, from the bottom of the heap of junk mail, or the back of the crowd applying for TSB shares, is certainly one of a rather mercenary world. When the economy as a whole isn't regularly spewing out annual increments, consumers and their suppliers start looking for perks and bonuses and bribes. Even without the blandishments of the lottery organisers, we're still tempted to envisage the relief of a boost to our capital or spending money—as in the 1930s our parents used to fancy winning "the Irish Sweep", a sooty and sinister figure, who turned out to be no more than a sweepstake, organised in Ireland, where such things were legal. Does it really imply some deep flaw of character, a degenerate society, a sign that we've turned materialist and lost our way?

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Fears of this sort were expressed in the 1950s and 1960s, when Harold Macmillan and Premium Bonds were hailed as forbidden fruit. "Affluence" meant worldly goods for parts of the population which had always lacked them; the eagerness with which it was grasped was unattractive, but wholly understandable. Premium Bonds, likewise, substituted the chance of big gains (or slow losses if you won nothing) for the virtual certainty of slow but regular earnings. Was the difference morally significant, or simply a matter of choice?

The fact is, I think, that "*Enrichissez-vous!*" has always seemed an ignoble admonition; yet, as Dr Johnson said, "There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money." The assumption is that money will be given only for services wanted and duly rendered—an assumption not always valid, but fair as a working hypothesis. The true test of the transaction's virtue is how much trust and patience and honesty it involves. Taking part in a lottery certainly requires all three. Offering bribes to make sound investments is another matter; and exploiting dreams, including the dreams of avarice, seems to me deeply suspect—ancient though the practice is.

As for myself, if you care to know, I enter every lottery that's offered, on the same principle that I've nothing to lose. Oddly, the effect is to kill the gambling instinct. The odds against a win are dizzying; but it's only when one's lost every day for years that one begins to believe it, and turn a gamble into a frivolous game. Ron Grifter, here I come.

*M*

## Confessions of an Atheist

We were born Godless into this world.
We learned to bend horseshoes, defy obstacles.
You, veterans, shouted "There is no God, no!"
(We believed in nothing. There was no need.)

We learned to look each instant in the face
as our dead heroes looked, and we vowed to do so
when we heard in our school rooms the composers
Dunaevsky and Pokrass and sang

"We must all march together—somewhere—
we must destroy, destroy, to build a new world."

The years smothered traditions and blotted out good.
We, the young princes, became self-satisfied kings.
Our own tender, trusting souls we neglected, betrayed.
We folded them into our pockets with our membership cards.

Now, in a new world, we compete for each crumb
of better, fatter, sweeter.

(Guilty consciences are hidden
like guns in the temple.)

We are not worth shooting.
Done for. Hopeless.
Afraid to utter aloud
the word "guilty"
although we whisper furtively
under our breath

"God forgive us."

And go on singing louder and louder

"We must destroy, destroy, to build a new world."

*A. Fradis*

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# *Osip Mandelstam*

## Verses on the Unknown Soldier

*(1937)*

1.

I call this air to witness—
His long-range firing heart—
And the ocean, windowless matter, busy,
Omnivorous in the dug-out.

How inquisitive these stars,
Constantly looking—wherefore?—
In condemnation of judge and witness,
At the ocean, windowless matter.

Rain, a grudging sower,
Its anonymous manna will recall
How a forest of small crosses marked
The ocean or salient of battle.

Cold, sickly men will kill,
Will chill and hunger,
And in his renowned grave
Has been put the unknown soldier.

Teach me, you feeble swallow
That have unlearned flying
How I can master this aerial grave
Without helm, without wing.

And on Lermontov, Mikhail,
I shall draft a bulletin:
How the grave corrects a stooping man
And its air pocket draws him in.

2.

These worlds, like moving grapes—
It is us they are menacing,
And hang like stolen townships,
Golden slips of the tongue, sneaks,
Berries of poisonous chill,
Tents of expandable constellations,
Golden sky-gobbets of fat.

3.

Through the decimalised ether, the light
By bright pain made transparent
And the moth of zeroes, brings
A number's commencement.

And beyond the field of fields a new field
Flies on like a three-cornered crane:
By a light-dusted path the message flies on,
And there's brightness from yesterday's battle.

By a light-dusted path the message flies on:
I am not Leipzig, Waterloo,
Or the Battle of the Nations—but new:
I will light up the world.

In the depth of the black-marble oyster
Is snuffed the gleam of Austerlitz;
The meridional swallow narrows its eyes,
Pestilent sand of Egypt clots.

4.

Arabian mish-mash, jumble,
The light of velocities ground into a ray—
And, with its oblique soles,
The ray stands on my retina.

Millions expendably killed
Have trampled a track in the void;
Good night and bless you, good luck to them
On behalf of the earthworks.

Over the craters, embankments, loose earth,
Among which befoggingly he loitered—
The sullen, pockmarked and downtrodden
Genius of ravaged graves.

Unsubornable sky of the trenches,
The sky of grand-scale wholesale deaths,
After you—away from you integral—
I haste with my lips in the dark.

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5.

The infantry die well,
The night chorus sing well too
Over Schweik's flat smile,
Over Don Quixote's avian lance,
Over the knightly avian metatarsus.

And friendly with man is the cripple:
Work will be found for all.
And on the age's periphery knocks
A family of wooden crutches:
Hey, comrades' union—global!

6.

Is it in order that troops should not fail
To pour into the sockets of its eyes,
Those cherished sockets, that should broaden the skull,
A whole forehead, from temple to temple?
The skull takes off from life,
A whole forehead, from temple to temple,
With the neatness of its sutures it taunts itself,
A comprehending dome in its clarity,
It seethes with thought, of itself it dreams,
Chalice of all chalices and homeland of homelands,
A bonnet stitched with stars—
A cap of felicity,
sire of Shakespeare.

7.

Lucidity of the ash-tree
The sycamore's clear-sightedness
Rush back into their abode
With a tinge of redness,
As though by trance conjuring
Both skies, their faint fires burning.
Only that which is too much
Is confederate with us;
What lies before us is not
A gulf but the measurable,
And to fight for a ration of air
Is a glory incomparable.

Have the vessels of comeliness
Been laid up in empty space
So that the white stars may rush
Back into their abode
With a tincture of red?
And conjuring my essence
With half trance-like existence,
Is it I who without choice consume
This broth and my head under fire?
Do you make out, night, stepdame
Of the starry gypsy encampment,
That which is now and to come?

8.

Aortas filled with blood; there flew
Along the ranks a small whisper:
"I was born in ninety-four,
I was born in ninety-two . . . "
And in my fist clutching hard
My dog-eared year of birth,

With the mob and the multitude,
I whisper with blood-drained mouth:
"I was born on second/third,
January night of ninety-one,
A most unreliable year,
And centuries hedge me with fire."

*Translated by Eugene Dubnov and John Heath-Stubbs*

*Note: The Russian word for moth ("mol") also signifies gram-molecular weight.*

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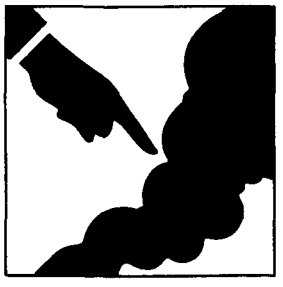
# NOTES & TOPICS

## The Israelis & their Enemies

### *"Uncosy" Zionists, "Easygoing" Arabs—By* MAX BELOFF



THE HISTORY of Zionism and of its creation the modern state of Israel has inspired a huge literature; but not surprisingly it is overwhelmingly the work of Jewish writers, whether in Israel or the Diaspora. Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien's lengthy and learned work[1] is thus a notable exception to the general rule. He has brought to his task not only the discipline of the professional historian and the eloquence of one of the outstanding political journalists of our time, but also a practical experience of the world of politics, gained in the affairs of his own country—Ireland—and in the service of the United Nations both as an official and as a national delegate.

No one who has been able to detach himself sufficiently from the nationalism of his own country to see how it fits into the general story of European nationalisms in the last two centuries can help but illuminate the story of another nationalism with even deeper and more complex roots and with even more serious unresolved problems. No one who has not seen at first hand the subordination of peaceful settlements by all the member-states of the United Nations to more immediate considerations of national rivalries and domestic politics could fail to arrive at the pessimistic conclusions about a solution to the problem of Israel's relations with her neighbours that dominate Dr O'Brien's analysis of the current situation.

To see where we go from here (or fail to go from here) depends in large part on one's evaluation of the history of how we got here; and it would be a pity if concentration on Dr O'Brien's necessarily personal and subjective reflections in his 20-page epilogue—it has already infuriated British arabophiliacs and will, I suspect, not cause joy in most respectable quarters in Israel—were to detract from the 640 pages of solid narrative and analysis that precede them. To dispute the conclusions, one would have to fault either the narrative or the analysis, or both. It would be curious if so ambitious an undertaking were flawless; the question is, rather, how much the flaws matter.

While immersion in Irish history has sensitised Dr O'Brien to some aspects of his present theme—above all to the religious dimension—he does not seek to draw too close a parallel. Herzl saw himself as a Jewish Parnell. And indeed both illustrate the familiar truth that the leaders of national movements very often come from sections of the nation that to some extent stand apart from the masses in whose name they operate and from whom the movement derives its power: Herzl, the westernised, assimilated Jew, idolised by the huddled masses of the Pale and the rest of Eastern Europe; Parnell, a member of the Protestant ascendancy; Mahomed Ali Jinnah, a sceptical secular-minded politician, as far removed as can be imagined from the Islamic roots of the idea of Pakistan—and other names spring easily to mind. Furthermore, Dr O'Brien elaborates on an idea put forward by one of Israel's most considerable authorities on Arab affairs, Yehoshua Porath: that in some circumstances an Arab Parnell might arise in Israel, and that the Knesset would then prove as vulnerable as was the British House of Commons to the purely political exploitation of the Party situation by the followers of Parnell and Redmond.

What is perhaps surprising is that Dr O'Brien nowhere draws what seems an even more obvious parallel: that between the *Yishuv* (the Jewish immigrants to Palestine as organised during the British Mandate) and Protestant Ulster. After all, both are majorities within a defined area, but both think and behave (understandably) as do threatened minorities. And if it be argued that the Israelis have more grounds for their sensitivity to anything that might alter the balance to their disadvantage, since the Arabs outnumber them by so much more than the combined populations of the Irish Republic and the Catholic community in the north outnumber Protestant Ulstermen, if Irish-Americans are taken into account the balance is not all that different.

The reason for calling attention to this parallel is not to provide answers for an imaginary examination—"Compare the Reverend Ian Paisley to Rabbi Meir Kahane"—but because it does seem to me that there is a difference between those nationalisms that have been concerned with overthrowing foreign domination over their acknowledged home territory—Czechs, Poles, Indians—and those that are concerned with the preservation of an area of settlement whose very title is questioned (even after the lapse of centuries)—Ulstermen, Israelis, Boers. Of course, the original circumstances were different in each case, as was the set of ideas governing their settlers' attitudes, thus giving rise

[1] *The Siege: The Saga of Zionism and Israel.* By CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20.00.



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to the temptation to rewrite history to make it fit with present needs, but the sense of danger will always be there.

However many insights comparative studies of nationalism may bring to the study of Zionism, it remains unique in respect of the size and diversity of the diaspora concerned and in the length of time that elapsed between the destruction of the last territorial Jewish entity and the revival in our own times of the Jewish State. For this reason Dr O'Brien is right to insist on the biblical grounding of the title deeds of the State, and to understand that for some Israelis the Bible not merely justifies the State's existence but indicates the proper extent of its boundaries.

There is, of course, a paradox embedded in this approach. Some of the founding fathers—including Herzl himself, and to some extent, in their very different ways, both Weizmann and Jabotinsky—were products of the European Enlightenment; and when asserting their belief that the position of the Jews could only be normalised by the possession of a State of their own, or at any rate a "National Home", did not think of it as being of necessity a State guided entirely by the religious law, still less some kind of theocracy.

This ambiguity is not confined to Zionism. The Arab national movement, too, began mainly under the banner of the Enlightenment and was, in the fertile crescent, largely inspired and even led by Christians, but it has since been caught up to a great extent by resurgent Islam. And, as Dr O'Brien points out, this leads Arab spokesmen today into a degree of double-talk: they use the language of the Enlightenment when appealing to the West for a "secular and democratic state" in Palestine; but for their own constituency remain faithful to the rejection inherent in Islam of any dichotomy between religious and political life. Hence Jerusalem is the "presiding symbol" of what is "fundamentally, on both sides, a religious-nationalist culture conflict".

FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW, a religious Jew could if so minded argue not unconvincingly, on the basis of the history here recounted, that the creation of the State of Israel must be regarded as willed by divine providence. The odds against it were so great—and in a variety of ways Israel's enemies, indeed Jewry's enemies, all acted in ways which, while intended to do the opposite, actually made possible an achievement of which the Zionists by themselves might have proved incapable. The Russian authors of the pogroms, the Americans who after the First World War closed the gates to immigration, the Nazis themselves, the rulers of the Soviet Union at a crucial point, the independent Arab States freed from European controls—all helped to swell the Jewish population of Palestine to make a Jewish State viable to begin with, and capable of defence and even expansion thereafter.

Most of all, however, it was the Palestinian Arabs—both within the original boundaries of the State and later in the occupied territories—whose leaders were the architects of their own defeat and partial dispossession. Again and again in the Mandatory period there were occasions when they were offered arrangements which would in fact have inhibited the growth of the National Home and (perhaps) prevented the coming into being of the State. They turned down these offers because they did not conform totally with the rejection of the Balfour Declaration and of any Jewish rights whatever in the Holy Land. In this intransigence they were encouraged by most of the Arab leaders outside Palestine. Dissentients within their own community and outside it (King Abdullah of Jordan) were assassinated.

Indeed, it could in the light of this be said that, so far from terrorism being the consequence of Palestinian homelessness—itself deliberately perpetuated—it was among its causes.

A responsibility closer to home is that of the British arabophiliacs whose opposition to the Balfour Declaration and to the commitment of the Mandate gave the Palestinian leaders and their Arab allies the conviction that if they made enough fuss and resisted all compromise they would get their way. Nor perhaps would the United Nations decision on partition have been challenged by force of arms (with the consequent creation of the refugee problem) had it not been for the (justifiable) belief that Labour's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, both assumed and hoped for an Arab victory. As Dr O'Brien remarks in another of his illuminating Irish asides:

> "No modern British statesman ever became nearly as obsessively anti-Irish as Ernest Bevin became anti-Jewish—without losing the support of the Prime Minister, the Government, Parliament or the people."

O'Brien is too subtle an historian to make the simple equation between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism; but that they fuel each other, he learned at the United Nations, and has not forgotten.

TO TELL THIS CONVOLUTED STORY, in which so much that happens is far from being the outcome of calculation, has not been an easy task. Dr O'Brien rarely nods.[2] But there are bound to be gaps in the knowledge of anyone dealing with so vast and diverse a scene.

I think myself that Dr O'Brien's picture of late Czarist Russia is somewhat over-simplified. It does not, for instance, distinguish sufficiently between the Russians proper, the vast majority of whom lived in areas where Jews were barred, and the quite different situation in Russian Poland, Byelorussia, and the Ukraine where the Jews were concentrated and where local nationalism presented both a threat to them and concern to their Russian overlords. Anti-Semitism also has its nuances.

It is arguable at least that Dr O'Brien over-emphasises the admittedly severe reaction that followed the assassination of

[2] The only errors I have noted both relate to the illustrations. A photograph is described as that of Peretz Smolenskin, when it is clearly labelled "M. L. Lilienblum", albeit in Hebrew characters. (I do not expect Dr O'Brien to read Yiddish but does no one at Weidenfeld's?) Even odder, what is clearly a vicious caricature of a Jew is described as a drawing of Edouard Drumont.

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Alexander II. Despite the repression and the curtailing of opportunities which provoked the massive emigration to the New World and, to a lesser extent, to Western Europe and Palestine itself, it could still be held that Russia would resume its path towards Western constitutionalism, particularly after the 1905 Revolution. Not all Jews saw no future other than in emigration or revolution. Nor was it altogether the case that the anti-Jewish measures had no external repercussions. It is true that they did not prevent the consolidation of the Franco-Russian Alliance, but they certainly made it harder for a British Liberal government to improve relations with the Russian government.[3] Nor, of course, was the United States unaffected.

The Mandate period is the most fully documented and presents the historian with the fewest problems of fact. But Dr O'Brien shows a capacity to stand back from the arguments of all the individuals involved and to ask the most difficult of all questions: not that which is most frequently asked—why, in 1917, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, which can be explained readily enough—but why successive British Governments persisted in upholding the obligation (at least in theory), and in demanding and retaining the Mandate, since in terms of British national interests the arguments against seemed so strong. However, he has not been able to provide a wholly satisfactory answer. On the actual conduct of the Mandate and the relations between the British and the Jews, Dr O'Brien is both fair and perceptive. He does, for instance, make proper allowance for the bureaucratic element in policy, tracing the shifts in influence from the military to the Colonial Office, and thence to the Foreign Office with its long commitment to the idea of Britain as the patron *par excellence* of the Arabs.

The missing element throughout is, I suspect, a failure to consider the French connection. Rivalry with the French in the Middle East preceded the British commitment to the Zionists, and long outlasted it.

On the final stages of the Mandate (and the extraordinary vicissitudes of the problem at the United Nations), and on United States policy where internal bureaucratic rivalries as well as domestic politics played their parts, Dr O'Brien gives one the full flavour of the situation as seen from New York. One is less certain that he has wholly appreciated the situation on the ground from the British point of view—perhaps the desperate heroism of the Jews offers fuller scope for the imagination. Dr O'Brien says that what needs explanation is why, having refused to enforce partition, the British should have prolonged their stay in the country for five months. He suggests that since the delay hampered the effort of the *Yishuv* to increase its armaments and enabled the Arab states to increase theirs, this must have been the intended purpose. But although this explanation is congruent with Ernest Bevin's fundamental attitude, it does not wholly accord with the needs of the situation as seen by the High Commission. For Sir Alan Cunningham, what mattered (as in any evacuation) was to get his men and their stores away with the minimum of loss, and if there was to be no formal transfer of power to the new authority, this was bound to take time.[4]

ON THE HISTORY OF the State itself and of the successive wars that have constituted his theme, Dr O'Brien is convincing in his reluctance to be mesmerised by the rhetoric on either side, and in his ability to see the extent to which the various governments, above all that of Syria, used the Palestine issue in pursuit of their own hegemonial desires. Dr O'Brien has admittedly been influenced by Gideon Rafael, the most erudite and eloquent practitioner and exponent of Israeli diplomacy, in his belief that the Yom Kippur War of 1973 could have been avoided and some political breakthrough attained if the government of Golda Meir had been less puffed up by the remarkable achievement of the Six Day War of 1967, and had not accepted Moshe Dayan's thesis that Israel needed no foreign policy, only a defence policy. The partial breakthrough with Anwar Sadat's Egypt could not stand by itself, and every subsequent effort to change things (including the miscalculations about the Lebanon both during and after the Lebanon War) has, unavoidably in Dr O'Brien's view, ended in futility. Israel is dependent upon a United States in which calculations of self-interest are likely to become more and more decisive. The Soviet Union, while desirous of avoiding a confrontation over the Middle East, can without too much risk go on giving Syria or other potential protégés the wherewithal to make life difficult for Israel.

TWO POWERFUL FORCES face each other, each convinced in their own terms that right is on their side. Each side has its own divisiveness—political on the Israeli side, religious and tribal on the Arab side. Israel, which achieved a popularity in the West on the basis of its victory in the Six Day War, has become the favourite target of the European Left as well as of much of the Third World (to which it once hoped to be a "development" bridge). Israeli excesses, or the notorious excesses of Israel's temporary allies, the Christian Phalangists of the Lebanon, furnish endless themes for Western preachers of non-violence. The enormously greater casualties inflicted by Assad upon his own subjects in northern Syria—or by the Druzes upon the Christians after Israel's withdrawal from the Lebanon—pass almost unperceived.

In such circumstances, it is scarcely to be wondered at that Dr O'Brien sees efforts by the West to hasten a solution through some form of mediation or pressure on Israel to withdraw from the West Bank of the Jordan as likely to be counter-productive—liable to encourage the Arabs to remain with their maximum goals and, even worse, to encourage Israeli extremists to take steps to bring about further removals of Arabs not merely from the West Bank but even from within Israel proper. Of course the present situation is

[3] See my lecture "Lucien Wolf and the Anglo-Russian Entente, 1907-1914", reprinted in Max Beloff, *The Intellectual in Politics and Other Essays* (1970).

[4] I have had the advantage of reading Professor Roger Louis's unpublished paper, "Sir Alan Cunningham and the End of British Rule in Palestine", delivered to a seminar in Jerusalem in May 1985.

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an affront to the Arab and Moslem worlds; of course the need to behave as a colonial power sits ill with Israel's conception of its libertarian democracy. But what if there is no alternative to yet another destructive conflict, and another, and another? It is for history to prove Dr O'Brien wrong. One looks for a *deus ex machina*, but since Dr Henry Kissinger left the scene, there has not been one flying around.

No *deus ex machina* is likely to come from Britain or indeed from Europe if, as the conventional British view has it:

> ". . . only the Americans can hope to influence Israel, and it is Israel which must give up territory if there is to be peace."

But Sir Anthony Parson's engaging personal memoirs,[5] while throwing no serious light on the problem of the Palestinians, make other contributions to our knowledge of the area, some of them perhaps inadvertently.

His long service as a diplomat in the Middle East (embracing Egypt and the Gulf as well as Iraq, Jordan and the Sudan) has not of course included Israel—though he was in Palestine as a soldier in the last period of the Mandate. Given the attitude that the Arab States maintain, it is obvious that no government is likely to give a posting to Israel to one of its core of dedicated Arabists from whose ranks the senior echelons of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are so disproportionately recruited. And this means that, like others, Sir Anthony, despite manifest efforts to be fair, can see only one side of the story.

He does tackle the interesting question of why what appeared to be an irresistible wave of Pan-Arab Nasserite revolution in the post-Suez era should have failed to overthrow the traditional régimes in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf, and seen in Egypt a return to national roots incompatible with the Nasserist ideology. He also notes again and again that the poison (as he believes it to be) injected into the Arab world and into Arab-British relations by the Palestine issue is even more important than 40 years ago. What he does not ask is whether the so-called "Arab National Movement" was ever a reality, and whether it has not all along been the indifference of Arab régimes of all complexions to any but the local political gains to be derived from exploiting this issue—as well as the absence of any serious human concern for the unfortunate Palestinians themselves—which much better explains what has happened and failed to happen.

By setting out in so personal a way the reasons for the affection he has developed for Arabs, untinged by the sentimentality of the desert—his Arabs are urban as well as urbane—he may help to illuminate the often baffling degree of misunderstanding between Englishmen and Israelis, and earlier between Englishmen and the Jews of the *Yishuv* in the Mandate period. The English and the Arabs, he believes (p. 156) have "a great deal in common . . . we are both easy-going, humorous, even cosy." Well, the Jews are not easy-going—could they afford to be? They are sometimes lacking in humour, except of the *Galgenhumor* kind; and they are certainly not cosy. Nor perhaps will all Jewish students share Sir Anthony's view that the presence in this country of more and more Arab students (good though it may be for business) is, academically and otherwise, an unmixed blessing. Some Arabs, too, are far from cosy.

[5] *They Say the Lion: A Personal Memoir.* By Anthony Parsons. Jonathan Cape, £9.95.

*London Commentary*

# Post-Conference Blues

## *By Edward Pearce*

Conferences, conferences, will there ever be an end to them? I write at a time when politicians are seen as a blur, having spent five weeks out of six hanging on to the margin of the Trade Union Congress, the Social Democrats, the Liberals, the Labour Party, and the Tories. Life is hotel bedrooms linked by train journeys, food is a hotel buffet of mix-it-yourself muesli and a glass-harmonica-like row of fruit-juice jugs, upon which *The Red Flag* or *Land of Hope and Glory* could easily be picked out. Back at the office there are people wanting me to write about teashops and the Secretary of State for Defence; weekends are swift intermezzi of delighting and then distressing the dog (my one consistent fan), and then catching another train.

Are we denouncing nuclear power stations as the work of the devil? This must be Blackpool and Labour. Are we talking with sympathy and understanding about Aids (or the Queen's Evil, as I sometimes call it)? Clearly this is Eastbourne and the Liberals. Hanging too good for them? No problems about that, roll the drums, play something grandiose on the Wurlitzer. Are you sitting comfortably? In a moment Margaret Thatcher will be with you. Then, gloriously, it is all over. No more police cordons; an end to the breach of the Health & Safety at Work Act which is the Press room at Harrogate; no more Tannoy shrilling in your ears urging that you stand by your beds and then vacate the building at quarter-to-seven when you have another hour's work to do; no more police overtime spent checking my keys and coins; alas, no more of Lord McAlpine's champagne fountain, a nightly affair of enough fizzy wine, oysters, and

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lobster to seduce an entire chorus line at the Gaiety in 1910, and now usefully applied to keeping the press above its station.

Actually, quite apart from that sort of thing—the right sort of Tory excess—it would be hypocritical, despite a measure of weariness and incoherence, to pretend that I really dislike the conference season. It is a peculiarly British institution and, having been denounced by Paul Johnson, clearly a sensible one. Mr Johnson, who seems to grow more frantically purple-featured with every year spent as the *Daily Mail*'s in-house patriot and pillar of "the family values", feels that it is insolent as well as superfluous for non-government parties to assemble and talk politics which can only be subversive. Happily, the Chilean itch of a certain sort of Conservative is not widely developed, and all the other sorts of nonsense flourish happily.

The real joy comes in the contrast between the parties on display. An Italian politician—Claudio Martelli, Deputy Leader of the admirable Italian Socialists, who quizzically watched Labour at Blackpool voting for the sort of things no Italian Socialist would contemplate—made a memorable distinction between British Labour and the Italian Communists. Labour, he said, is more extreme, but the PCI is more illiberal. The Italian Communists have more moderate policies, but reach them by central command (indeed, they resolve to be either nice or nasty very much by that central command), while Labour is democratic and devoted to endless debate. It is a good point, and, for all the calamitous follies which have emerged, one to be remembered in Labour's favour.

Whether the Conservatives are as lax and easygoing as the PCI is a very doubtful matter. That party is led by the hand, supervised in the spending of its pocket money, and fed on bread and warm milk—the party of family values understands how to treat children. For the Tories are not natural democrats; it is their instinct to play democracy by numbers, observing the forms of debate without being embarrassed by the thing itself. The motions submitted to Conference compete against one another in the thick, glutinous texture of their servility: "While congratulating the Government on its wonderful achievements in the field of education/health/fish-farming, this Conference regrets that it has perhaps not entirely succeeded in presenting that superlative achievement as effectively as it deserves." This could count as near mutiny.

It is common for the Chairman to forget whether speakers have addressed themselves for or against the motions, so dulcet and bland are the forms of words expressing them. As for the Chairmen themselves, perfect knighthood material, small-trade professional people, picked from a pool of *lumpen*-loyalists, they sweat respect for the great folk they have the honour to introduce. An interesting sociological sidelight is the near absence of first names. The American democratic universalisation of Joe and Fred, as addressed to high-ups in the other three parties and the trade-union movement, has no parallel here.

Personally, I like the demotic and levelling impulse to treat important people as fellow human beings. It's good for them. But among the Tories it is a matter of "As Mr Baker said", or "I do so agree with Mr Rifkind". The Conservative rank-and-file are grateful and reverent, feeling themselves to be present on sufferance and as a very great privilege. The objection to such deference is more than a light-hearted observation. The validity of a pro-business party in government in a country which has our appalling anti-business prejudices seems overwhelming at present, especially when Labour has in its democratic way opted for anti-arithmetic in economic policy and for the casting of nuclear defence into oblivion. What a pity it is that the Tories cannot concentrate on being just that, a sensible pro-business, strong defence party. Their conference style tells you more about the old, deferential, place-knowing, title-hunting, cringe and carry-on, hierarchical England than I think I want to know.

Admittedly, various super-reactionary instincts are kept at bay by shutting the real Conservative Party in a cupboard and not letting him out to play. The masses broke into 35 seconds of rapture when someone called for hanging. Interestingly, Mrs Thatcher joined in the applause while the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, coolly abstained. But then, in some eyes, Mrs Thatcher is herself a sort of monstrous conference delegate who by some freak of nature has come out from under her floral hat, seized the radio station, shot the president, broadcast continuous martial music, and created her by own Bolivian régime under the appalled noses of her betters.

Everything about Mrs Thatcher is populist, apart from her own deference to the ways of the people who despise her. She speaks to Conference like the future first-generation Countess she is. The rose in her blouse is not like Labour's rather tasteful new emblem: it is "the rose of England". Her concluding speech is a dreadful attempt to patronise argument back into the closet, claiming that the Conservatives saved the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital. As they had planned to close it, this pitch lifts *chutzpah* to a level not previously dreamt of. But it is the level of rectitude we should expect from the heroine of the Westland affair.

HOWEVER, THERE IS LIFE beyond the Tories, though whether it is entirely convincing is another matter. The Liberals, in many ways an endearing party, ran a conference at Eastbourne which lent a strong rationale to the Czechoslovakian floor-management of the Tories. Any observer of the British scene would broadly agree that it was essential for the Alliance (Liberals plus Social Democrats) to come up with a position on Defence sufficiently balanced between cogency and vagueness to stay out of trouble.

It isn't very difficult to grasp. The Tories, although very unpopular after seven years in power, and suitably bleak about that fact themselves, have one strong card, a tough, realistic commitment to Defence—an independent deterrent, the Atlantic Alliance, and a successor to *Polaris*. This is something which, in both defence and political terms, they have got right. Anyone pitching hard against it is simply feeding underdone roast votes to the Government. David Owen and his Social Democrats not only understand that, but psychologically, because they have their political impetus from the old Right wing of Labour, whence many of them

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came, they are geared to getting this one right. They are an Atlanticist, pro-Defence party, whose one caveat—rejection of the *Trident* submarine system—is based on cash and common sense, and is consequently popular with the voters, only 13% of whom want *Trident*. The message "Defend Britain, but not at de luxe rates" has the rare virtue of being good sense and good politics at the same time.

Easy to grasp it might be for most people, but not for the Liberals. There are complications because, the form of successor to *Polaris* once chosen, an Anglo-French deterrent had "fix" written all over it. But then a fix was itself the consequence of trying to have the Liberals live with an extension of the *status quo* in Defence. All sense held to the Alliance doing the boring thing, and keeping out of the headlines and the Tory firing-line. By a narrow majority on Tuesday, 23 September, the Liberals—like the General Staff before the Battle of the Somme—decided to do the exciting thing.

It was never open to Labour to dodge the consequences of its sincere beliefs, but the expulsion of all US nuclear bases and an express rejection of the nuclear umbrella mean that though the Party has opted to stay notionally in NATO, it takes up a position between a weak, nuclear-free member of the Atlantic Alliance like Denmark and a candid neutral like Sweden. This peri-neutralism, offered within the second nation of NATO, the most strongly armed country in Western Europe, is devastating to our allies and damn frightening to us British.

The Conservatives will not be cynically playing a card when they stress Defence as the first, second, third and fourth issue of the next General Election. They are also fortunate in having as their Defence Secretary and spokesman on this issue, George Younger, one of those inherently decent, temperate, unhysterical specialists in a subject, who carry the best, most credible authority; he in his rational way will be enormously persuasive.

SUDDENLY, the electoral situation looks very different. The first poll after Labour Conference, one carried by *The Guardian*, showed their lead, so dearly won, eroded to a single point. More important, the Alliance has dropped, *à la* John Anderson in the US in 1980, to a figure which is electorally negligible given our system (they have 20% against an earlier steady 27). The consequence of this is to undermine Labour, which needs a three-way split to maximise the swing it can still pick up. And the business of driving the question home has only started.

Which makes rather a nonsense of Paul Johnson's authoritarian resentment of conferences. They have served to make two political parties work out their own destiny on a major issue. In Labour's case, given Neil Kinnock's convictions, even under a more autocratic structure they would have gone most of this way, but some camouflage or top-dressing might have been feasible. The Liberals, who permit any paid-up member of the Party to come and vote, have done the complete democratic thing.

Conferences would appear to be the contemporary equivalent of sin—be sure they will find you out! The Liberals may be nicer people than the Tories, in a hazy sort of way; Labour may practise an earnest democracy and have an impressive new leader. But if I pick up the pointers correctly, what they have each managed to tell the voters is that they don't actually want to be elected.

In view of Mrs Thatcher's general unpopularity and the disrepute into which she had fallen after the Westland affair, coupled with figures of some four million unemployed, the Tories hardly deserve re-election. If they get back as a result of the compulsive democratic instincts of their opponents, the irony will be oceanic.

All the British opposition parties can do now, after a black autumn of suicidal veracity, is to watch the money markets (also democracies of sorts, perhaps). As the pound plunges towards two Deutschmarks and dies against the lira, satisfaction of a bitter sort may be gained. The opposition parties put their faith in free speech—and look where it got them. They may reflect that the Tories put an equal confidence in market forces.

# Paris Notebook

## *By Jean-François Revel*

## Amnesia International

ARE WESTERN societies doomed to perpetual impotence when faced with terrorism? In the beginning their disability was their own sheer blindness. It's not so very long ago that the fashionable Paris Left was enthusing about the killers of the Baader-Meinhof gang, not long since our own government was meekly delivering the Iraqi murderer of a French policeman to his plane at Orly airport, or since the Left had the stupidity to blame the *Nouvelle droite* for an attack on a synagogue in the rue Copernic—when the real perpetrators came, like so many others before and since, from Damascus or Beirut. Only recently, hands were being thrown up in horrified protest against the introduction of foolproof identity cards, as if what was really needed was a better death-certificate.

This is a war, they now tell us. And not before time. So how have we been waging this war? how are we fighting it right this minute? how do we intend to fight it in the future? and against whom, if we refuse to identify the enemies who arm the aggressors?

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Our Foreign Minister recently informed a radio interviewer that we should beware of seeing international terrorism as evidence of a coordinated network. The phrase which has been taken up by the French media to make fun of this idea is "*chef d'orchestre clandestin*"—the behind-the-scenes "conductor" whom the more paranoid observers believe is orchestrating the terrorist campaign. Between this silly theory and the equally silly theory which insists on seeing international terrorism merely as a collection of random actions, there is plenty of room for the truth which has gradually emerged from all these ordeals: namely, that with the passing years a multiplicity of terrorist groups with politically and geographically separate origins has been co-ordinated and interlinked by certain sovereign States.

These States are known. The ones that really count today are Iran, Libya, and—first and perhaps foremost—Syria. Behind these countries (usually, and most cautiously, through its intermediary satellites) stands the Soviet Union. A member of the terrorist group *Action Directe* was released from prison a few months ago, and immediately gave a series of radio interviews in praise of murder. Subsequently he was observed spending a peaceful weekend in Sofia.

WHAT IS THE USE of reiterating that we are at war, or that international State terrorism is targeted principally against the democracies—ideas which have taken a long time to sink in—if we are afraid to draw the necessary conclusions? For we *are* afraid; and that is why we continue to treat terrorism as a civil matter, a question of policing, when it is actually a matter for national defence. That is why we define a problem of international relations as a problem of domestic law-and-order.

When the Italian Government prevents the Americans from arresting the true organiser of the *Achille Lauro* hi-jacking; when French justice passes a derisory sentence, or no sentence at all, on a criminal responsible for the murder of several foreign diplomats on our own soil; when the lawyer of this same killer makes it quite clear that he has been negotiating behind the scenes with the French State; and, finally, when the governments of Western Europe strike up in almost unanimous chorus to condemn the President of the United States for his attack on the terrorist headquarters in Tripoli, then the very least that can be said is that we have a queer way of looking at war. Our resistance is more like Pétain's than de Gaulle's.

There is a strange contrast between the virile speechifying of Western European leaders (both of the Right and of the Left) immediately after some new assault, and the evaporation of their firm decisions in the days following the outrage. So complete is their capacity for forgetfulness between one performance and the next that we are back to square one after each blood-letting: the same actors make their entrance and, struck by the selfsame sudden revelation, speak the same lines. This is not Amnesty International but Amnesia International.

The West European governments started the year 1986 (just after the airport attacks in Vienna and Rome) by refusing to be associated with an American plan for international coordination in the fight against terrorism. Eminent politicians and witty commentators fell over themselves to sneer at the cowardice of American tourists who, fearing a terrorism which apparently was non-existent, except in President Reagan's imagination, balked at coming over to prop up our hotel industry.

It is difficult to build a coherent policy for countering international State terrorism on the basis of such illogical analysis. Why, for example, hush up the fact that both Malta and Athens maintain relations with Colonel Gaddafi which are too cordial to be honest? Must we tolerate this indefinitely? The Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez, refused to see any international coordination among the various terrorist groups until the day he realised that killers from the Basque *Eta* were being welcomed and trained in Nicaragua—departing for Spain again, after due rest and recuperation, armed with false passports (usually Panamanian). He learnt a lot that day, though that does not mean that he gained *enough* understanding, still less that he would take any appropriate action.

And that is the crux of the matter. We dare not move directly against the foreign capitals which arm the terrorism that is killing us. We never cease to proclaim that we will not give way to blackmail, but apart from that we do nothing, even in anticipation of the next outrage. So let's not have too much talk of "a war". For the fear is that we may already have lost it.

# South Africa Adrift: A French View

THAT WE ARE witnessing the last days of South Africa as we have known it, as the independent State it became in 1910, and above all as the meticulously organised, explicitly racist State set up by the Nationalist Party since 1948, seems to me an undoubted fact. The one question that arises in practice is to determine whether in the years to come the expiring régime will give way to a viable multiracial democracy or to an exclusively Black régime whose political definition cannot as yet be foreseen.

That is because the situation in South Africa is both unique and inextricable. In the United States, when the American Negroes were at the starting-point of the process of accession to citizenship, they represented less than one-tenth of the population. In the Republic of South Africa it is, or it soon will be, the reverse. By the year 2000, out of 45 or 50 million inhabitants, there will be 5 million Whites. Not that the non-

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Whites are all Blacks: there are also Indians, and in particular there are the "Coloureds", who are not of mixed black and white blood, but the descendants of the Hottentots and Malays who formerly interbred with Europeans. (In the Cape Province, for example, they make up the largest community: 2,200,000, as compared with 1,500,000 Blacks and 1,200,000 Whites.)

As for the Whites, it is quite impossible to compare them with, say, the French population of Algeria in the past. The white South Africans have no *mère-patrie*, no mother country to fall back on, no mother language other than Afrikaans, which retains only a distant relationship with Dutch. As the descendants of Dutch and French families who set out in the 17th century for a land which was then without any black population, from their own point of view it is they who were the original race and the victims of colonisation. Did they not have to free themselves from British domination at the cost of a protracted and bloody struggle? That is true of the Afrikaners, who are at the heart of the white problem, and numerically the largest white group. They differ from "the English", as they call them there, who are the descendants of the colonial power (and who may carry two passports, the South African and the British). Thus, these South African English might possibly resettle in the United Kingdom if things went too disastrously. There is no safe haven for the Afrikaners.

Yet I am merely scraping the surface of an interminably complex theme. Charles Zorgbibe is a French expert on international relations and on constitutional law, and the value of his recent book[1] is to take us far deeper into these complexities. A travel account combined with a series of interviews, it gives a survey of the various viewpoints and the arguments: those of the Whites, both the opponents and supporters of reforms; those of the Blacks, both the extremists and the moderates; those of the "Coloureds", caught between two fires; and of the Indians, who are afraid of being expelled as they were in Uganda. The picture he paints is fascinating for those whose interest is history; it is hopelessly depressing for anyone whose interest lies in politics, in other words in effective action, so insoluble does the riddle seem.

For if apartheid, which deprives the Blacks of their right to vote, is unacceptable for them, as for any democrat in the world, the prospect of universal suffrage expressed by the formula of "one man, one vote" is seen by the Afrikaners as heralding their political death. In this system they would lose not only their dominant position, the inevitable result of the most elementary democratic logic, but even, so they believe, the continuance of their rights as a minority.

In this respect the evolution of Zimbabwe since it ceased to be Rhodesia has provoked their distrust. What is there left of the Lancaster House accords which were signed in December 1979? These guaranteed the Whites full citizenship in the future sovereign country of Zimbabwe. Not content with trampling on the rights of the white community, Robert Mugabe has also (and sometimes bloodily) crushed the black ethnic minorities. This is the point made to Charles Zorgbibe by a member of the South African Prime Minister's Cabinet (a descendant of French Huguenots) who added: "Oh, the international hypocrisy! The UN demands a perfectly democratic procedure . . . but only in South Africa! In Angola and Mozambique there has never been a free election. . . . In Zambia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe it all went over to a dictatorship very fast. Does the UN call for any kind of democratic renaissance in those countries? . . ."

Certainly the dossier of opponents of apartheid would be sounder if we fought for human rights to be respected in the whole of Africa, and not solely in Pretoria. Must we conclude that, for us Europeans, oppression ceases to be immoral when it is Blacks who are oppressing other Blacks. . . ? Universal suffrage? Perhaps, say the Afrikaners, provided that its one and only effect were not to instal a single party in power, irreversibly. There is hardly ever a second vote in the African continent: the slogan most often observed is "*Un homme, une voix, une fois*: One man, one vote, once."

THE BLACKS do not pay much heed to these considerations about the evils of democracy in countries other than their own. They see the thousand injustices which hold them victim, and their élites will no longer endure being kept deprived of political power. The reforms which began to dismantle apartheid five years ago have come too late; and instead of putting a brake on radicalisation, they have speeded it up. Yet they do go further than is generally acknowledged. The latest measure, which has been in force since July, abolished all restrictions on the movements of Blacks, including the compulsory possession and carrying of the official "pass", which has been replaced for all South Africans by a unique identity-card which will no longer refer to race. This measure has made its appearance at the height of a state of emergency—and at a time when it can no longer mollify anybody. Had the selfsame decision been taken cold, only a few years ago, it would, I think, have strengthened the chances for a moderate solution of compromise, and for non-violent evolution.

The Blacks, driven to the extreme, are not especially disturbed, either, by objections having to do with a possible collapse of the South African economy. Yet the standard of living of the Blacks of South Africa, although scandalously lower than that of the Whites, is on average very much higher than that of other Africans. Furthermore, South Africa makes a substantial contribution to the economy of the entire African continent. There has been continual growth in the volume of its exports to other African countries; but it is forbidden in Pretoria to mention the names of these countries individually, for fear of compromising them. All they will give is the total figures for exports in Africa. It is quite comic to see the same African countries simultaneously making *sotto voce* requests to Pretoria for increasing their imports and payment facilities, while bellowing at the Europeans and Americans to implement draconian economic sanctions.

But that is not the problem for the black South African worker, whose chief and proper concern is above all the local

[1] *Les derniers jours de l'Afrique du Sud.* By CHARLES ZORGBIBE. Presses Universitaires de France.

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situation. He is equally indifferent about the Soviet role in the instability in the region. It is common knowledge that Nelson Mandela's African National Congress is linked with the USSR, as is SWAPO in Namibia. Likewise, it is a notorious commonplace that those African countries which have fallen under the Soviet thumb have paid for their choice with a disintegration so calamitous that they are reduced, from the depths of their famine, to go begging in the West for the aid that Moscow turns out to be incapable of providing. But apparently this spectacle does not prevent the ANC and Nelson (and Winnie) Mandela from receiving the support of the majority of South Africa's Blacks.

Ought we, then, to despair of finding any solution that would preserve the gains in economic development while at the same time freeing the Blacks from their oppression? At variance with most Western analysts, Charles Zorgbibe attachs a certain value to the experience of the "homelands" (those kinds of black states, theoretically self-governing, based on ethnic groups). Western countries have refused to recognise them, considering them contrivances fudged up to conceal the persistence of apartheid. Yet "one test would suffice", writes Zorgbibe, "one pilot experiment, which if it succeeded would come to be seen as an historic turning-point, and that is the unification of Kwazulu with the province of Natal. . . ." It is true that the Prime Minister of Kwazulu, Chief Buthelezi, is the most influential of the black reformist leaders, and Natal the province with fewest Afrikaners among its white community. It would mean starting at the point of least resistance. . . . But between pragmatic fumblings and unending bloodshed, is there still time to choose.

# Do You Like French Cooking?

ARE YOU GRIEVED by the insipid monotony of an "*escalopine*" of angler-fish with spinach "shoots" and "*petits légumes*" in spectral "truffle juice", the whole dish just about as tasty as a slice of blotting-paper? Are you made uneasy by the prospect of a "*tresse*" of sole with "lobster pieces"—so many pieces, so little lobster? Express such thoughts, and straight away you are assailed by ironic remarks on your incorrigible allegiance to the old, the antiquated, school.

"Ah, I see what it is! Monsieur is all for fat, he is fond of his floury thickenings, his overcooked fish, his sauces laced with cream." This contrast is a simplistic one, as the readers of *Le Point* in Paris are well aware. (Its cooking correspondent, who is an enthusiast for the best of the *nouvelle cuisine*, is also a dedicated revivalist for the deeper tradition of French cooking.) But Pierre-Marie Doutrelant does not intend to be pigeon-holed, and he fulfils his ambition, even though his book[1] has generally been described as "a counterblast against the new cuisine." Certainly he takes it to task with a tart wit when he makes fun of some degenerate imitations; but then he can also acknowledge the genuinely creative exponents, portraying them with a liveliness which spices affectionate admiration with a dash of satirical verve. Yet the cardinal merit of this delicious book is to take us on a guided tour of the hidden country and seafood cooking of France: the cuisine that dares no longer speak its name and which is more or less ignored by the press and by the usual guides, existing in the catacombs of local tradition.

It is impossible to duck the impression that our French national repertoire, condemned without a proper trial, is dying out, to be replaced by a new academicism which is the negation of everything that the new cuisine originally set out to be. "There are so many cooks", Doutrelant laments, "who churn out the same twenty so-called 'new' dishes, 365 days a year, from one end of the country to the other." This uniformity amounts to the reincarnation of the old and quite properly execrated "*cuisine de palace*"; and it dresses up, like its ancestor, in high-flown names. The essence of the new cuisine is that its only true realm is the sublime. It is all invention and probity. Consequently only a handful of practitioners can bring it off. Now, a country with a true gastronomic culture would not only be a country where it is possible to find ten chefs of genius, followed by some fifty conscientious disciples, and a few hundred plagiarists devoid of both art and seriousness. It would also be a country where the everyday cuisine is good practically everywhere, both in the little average restaurants and in the plusher establishments, to become a matter of great art at the higher level.

The situation in present-day France? It is just the reverse. You can eat poorly everywhere, except in the few dozen houses that the critics constantly discuss and that the same two or three thousand people patronise.

"*Adieu, bistrot, on t'aimait bien!*" sobs Doutrelant, before going on to fulminate against the "fast food" invasion. But how can one fail to see that the proliferation of the latter is filling the void left behind by the death of the bistros? What are they supposed to do, those customers of the reliable neighbourhood eating-places where poor students used to rub shoulders with masons and plumbers, junior executives with girls from the telephone company, shopgirls with hard-up authors? Where are they to eat? *Chez Taillevent*? The "fast foods" may be mechanised, but they are not uneatable like the stuff served by all those pleasant cafés that suddenly turn into fancy restaurants on the stroke of noon, where you may dissect the corpse of French cuisine.

So it is not a matter of arguing whether we ought to give preference to the *nouvelle* over the *ancienne cuisine*. That's a false debate. Our old French cuisine is dying, at least in the commercial sphere. The new is only practised (charlatans aside) by a handful of *grands artistes*. So the question is, what is to come? Perhaps we shall be saved by "*la deuxième révolution française*"—the cuisine of cellophane and the vacuum pack, that marriage of mass-production and fine art, of computer science and the bistro, of the ancient and the modern. Doutrelant thinks so. Read him . . . and pray.

*J.-F.R.*

[1] *La bonne cuisine et les autres*. By PIERRE-MARIE DOUTRELANT. Editions du Seuil.

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# The View from Vnukovo

## *Discovering Vasily Grossman—By* ANDREI NAVROZOV

IN THE mid-1960s, when I was a child, my parents bought a house in Vnukovo. It was an Italianate villa with twelve rooms, two open and two covered terraces, surrounded on one side by a vast apple orchard and on the other by a birch grove. Vnukovo is a couple of train-stops away from Peredelkino, the better-known "writers' settlement", where we had rented a house in earlier years. With the exception of Tvardovsky, the *Novy Mir* editor, who had a *dacha* on the other side of the lake, our "writers' settlement" did not have a single writer whose name would be charged with the kind of "liberal" significance the new age demanded.

Here the *zubry*, "the old bisons", were quietly dying. Our neighbour to the left was Bubennov, author of *The White Birch*—inspired, perhaps, by our birch grove—very likely the worst Stalinist novel ever written, with the possible exception of Gladkov's *Cement* or Katayev's *Time, Forward!* To the right, our neighbour was Lebedev-Kumach, whose Stalinist anthem *Broad is My Native Land* is known to every child. Dunayevsky, the official composer, Surkov, the official poetaster, Lepeshinskaya, the official biologist who had worked, on Stalin's personal orders, to solve the riddle of immortality, all lived down the street. Around the corner, things became even more confusing: here stood the country houses of Gromyko and other Soviet officials who, while known in the West, are not men of recognised literary ability. It is as if they were there to reinforce the ebbing influence of the Stalinist cultural establishment, to prop up its declining fortunes by administrative means.

Relief in Vnukovo would come with the summer people. Obviously we had no friends among the "year-round" people like ourselves, the "writers" of the settlement. My father's "official" occupation was translation of literature, as well as of scientific texts, into English—an occupation which, because of the needs of the Soviet régime, made him sufficiently successful to buy the house at 4 Mayakovsky Street—but privately, during most of his life, he wrote "for the desk drawer". We laughed at our neighbours and eagerly awaited the arrival of the entertaining summer crowd, who would rent the unoccupied houses in the settlement, as we ourselves had done in earlier years in Peredelkino. My parents both worked at home, I never attended Soviet schools, and our house—exceptional from every point of view—was always ready to receive guests.

The guests were varied. Igor Galanin, the painter, renting the Lebedev-Kumach house, brought Andrei Bitov—along with Fasil Iskander, among the most gifted and original writers to emerge in the '60s—who shocked my father by drinking vodka before breakfast. Across the road, Lepeshinskaya's guest-house was let to relatives of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whom he visited. Our own guest-house was taken by my uncle, an unremarkable but prominent poet and a brilliant conversationalist. Yevgeni Yevtushenko, another unremarkable but prominent poet, would sometimes visit as well—on those days my uncle would absent himself, not because Yevtushenko was dull, but because two unremarkable prominent poets can rarely endure one another for long.

Once a friend of Solzhenitsyn's brought us a copy of *The First Circle*, just published in Russian abroad. I shall never forget how he came by bicycle and took out a large loaf of rye bread from a string bag. When he came into the house, he took the small edition out of the hollowed-out loaf and lent it to us for 48 hours—then the standard lending period for *samizdat* literature. So free was the political atmosphere of our Vnukovo enclave, tucked away in between the decrepit socialist-realist literary establishment and the illiterate Soviet bureaucratic élite, that his precautions provoked only merriment and jokes about "the Decembrists".

My father, who was not a member of the Party or any other Soviet organisation, was never a "dissident". He was a free-thinker—he remains one to this day—who believed that in every society the level of "dissidence" is, alas, always inversely proportional to the level of repression, which means that if people are *allowed* to rebel, they do. For this reason, he found the notion of "dissidence" unpleasant; if one cannot rebel when one is not allowed to rebel, one should not rebel at all. On the other hand, one should always be able to think, speak, and write in the privacy of one's home, no matter how dangerous this private activity may be. The "dissidents" who came to our house were welcome there because many were interesting conversationalists, not because my father took their political aims seriously. Hence the jokes about "De-



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cembrists", and the reason why what might have been perceived as a transubstantial mystery—the book, the word, contained in a loaf of bread—was perceived instead as amateur theatre.

EVEN AGAINST THE BACKDROP of unprecedented freedom in the mid-'60s, the intellectual life of our Vnukovo enclave was something of a miracle. We were beyond dissidence, taking for granted our sacred liberties of thought and speech, and in that atmosphere Russian culture seemed to live on, miraculously, as if the decimations of previous decades had never taken place. All that remained of Soviet literature was the country houses of Stalin's writers. Most of them, as my mother would point out, were not in good shape.

AT DINNER, often in the presence of visiting Europeans or Americans, the lives and fates of Russian writers would be discussed in Vnukovo. The theme of these discussions—and perhaps it was inevitable that in the home of a man condemned (or so he believed) to a lifetime of writing "for the desk drawer" it would be a recurrent one—was, essentially, the lack of any true correlation between achievement, recognition, and reputation in contemporary society East or West, by contrast with the cultural Atlantis that was once Russia. Boris Pasternak, whom my father had met and my uncle had known in the 1950s, was a good example: between 1912 and 1934 he created a body of verse by which Russian culture would be measured for millennia to come, yet how many Westerners knew his name at the time? It took the *Zhivago* scandal he sought to avoid, with the poet who had by then lost his voice at its centre, for Pasternak to become "famous" in the West. And Vladimir Nabokov? Were it not for the unforeseen "sex scandal" of *Lolita*, arguably his worst book, the old émigré might have died in obscurity, like Remizov or Georgii Ivanov.

With increasing frequency the case of Solzhenitsyn, which was just beginning to make regular headlines in the West, would be discussed among the guests in Vnukovo. While no one present would rank the nascent celebrity with Pasternak, or even Nabokov, all agreed that *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was a genuine piece of literature, which our neighbour Tvardovsky recognised. On the other hand this could not be said about Solzhenitsyn's later work, and it was equally clear that had it not been for Khrushchev's plan to discredit his political enemies for the purposes of power consolidation, the world would have known Solzhenitsyn only in the sense that it knew, say, Ivan Solonevich, who had published his two-volume *Russia in a Concentration Camp* some 30 years earlier.

At the same time, everyone would marvel at what Solzhenitsyn was doing with the fabulous gift of international publicity which Khrushchev, for purposes of his own, had bestowed upon him. It was amazing, someone would say, that "Isaich"—the abbreviated patronymic employed by Solzhenitsyn's associates (by analogy with "Ilyich", Soviet propaganda's tender nickname for Lenin) to indicate intimacy, and used by others ironically—actually counted on getting the Lenin Prize for Literature. He had miscalculated, of course, since the powers-that-be had already used him and now wanted only to be rid of him; but, on the whole, his cunning in the management of publicity was by all estimates unsurpassed.

If the name of Vasily Grossman was ever mentioned in Vnukovo, it was mentioned in one breath with the names of the "year-round" people, although it was certainly not as much a symbol of literary Stalinism as the names of Bubennov or Gladkov. A Jewish name could not be such a symbol, even if prefaced with a Christian name like "Vasily". Still, as my father would joke, standing at the edge of our birch grove as if it were the Elbe, "Out there is Soviet power." Grossman was definitely "out there".

The reason why even a non-Jewish boy of ten could understand intuitively as I did that "Grossman" or "Ehrenburg", no matter what they wrote, represented a different reality than "Bubennov" or "Gladkov" is close to the very heart of *Le Cas Grossman*, to borrow the title of Simon Markish's 1983 study. It is only now, after I have become familiar with Grossman's work, and after reading the memoir by the poet and translator Semen Lipkin, *Stalingrad Vasiliya Grossmana—The Stalingrad of Vasily Grossman*—that I understand fully what I could only sense intuitively in Vnukovo.[1]

My childhood years in Vnukovo, with their endless stream of conversation about writers' lives and fates, had prepared me well for my readings about the Grossman case. Above all, I was ready to witness a drama without heroes or villains, in which the various personages assumed different moral roles depending on circumstances of which they themselves were often only dimly aware.

VASILY GROSSMAN made his literary debut in 1934, a pivotal year for literature in Russia: it was in 1934 that the Union of Soviet Writers was established and all "independent" publishing, already abolished *de facto*, was abolished *de jure*. Grossman's debut, in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, was the story "In the Town of Berdichev". According to Semen Lipkin, Isaac Babel praised Grossman for seeing "our kike capital" with "new eyes", while Mikhail Bulgakov was surprised: "Am I to understand that something decent can still get printed?" In retrospect, what seems surprising is not that "something decent" was published as late as 1934 but the fact that the story, about the Civil War, actually contained the frightening word "Berdichev", the name of "our kike capital", in its title. Maxim Gorky was favourably impressed with the story—which only shows that even he "lacked class sense", that is, did not know which way the wind was blowing.

It was blowing a gale. My father once observed that Soviet history may be described in terms of political movement from

[1] *Stalingrad Vasiliya Grossmana*. By SEMEN LIPKIN. Ardis, $19.50, paper $6.50; £17.50, paper £5.90 (distributed by Holdan Books, 11 Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3AR).

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the totalitarian "Left" to the totalitarian "Right".[2] That movement was interrupted by World War II, because it was with the totalitarian "Right" that Stalin was unexpectedly confronted, and so adjustments had to be made. One of these was the postponement of his "final solution" of the Jewish question, conceived as part of an overall plan for a Russian nationalist Soviet state. Although, even in the 1930s, many of Grossman's Jewish colleagues were arrested and sent to their death, he was not—and then the War intervened and granted him a reprieve. It is fair to assume that, like nearly everyone during the bloody years of Stalin's purges, at the time Grossman did not see the overall pattern of Stalin's intentions. When the writer Boris Guber, the first husband of Grossman's wife Olga, was arrested, Grossman did nothing; when Olga was arrested too, he wrote to the dreaded *NKVD* chief Yezhov to explain that she was now his wife and not poor Guber's. Unbelievably, she was released.

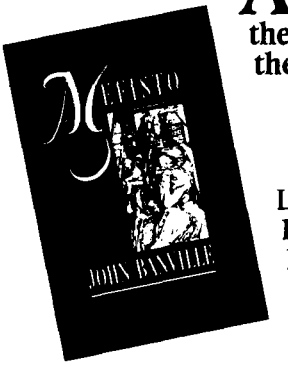
When things happen to others—or when bad things happen to others and good things happen to us—it is always difficult to discern the overall pattern. Rather, we tend to perceive events—especially political developments—as part of nature, of some natural process, some eternal flowing. Grossman was no exception. As the War—unbeknown to him, his saviour—went on, Grossman, like Ehrenburg, distinguished himself as a front-line reporter for the newspaper *Red Star*. Yes, the totalitarianism of Hitler was threatening the totalitarianism of Stalin, and people with names like Grossman could be published in newspapers with names like *Red Star*.

In 1943, Grossman began writing his epic novel about Stalingrad, *For a Righteous Cause*. Stalingrad was the turning point of the War; in a sense, then, it was the beginning of the end of Grossman's reprieve, for once the War was over Stalin would return to his old plan. But Grossman did not perceive the overall pattern, and the future victim was lauding his future executioner's "cause".

IT WAS TVARDOVSKY, the same Tvardovsky of *Ivan Denisovich* fame, our Vnukovo neighbour across the lake, who came to see Grossman after reading the manuscript of the Stalingrad novel. As the newly-appointed editor of *Novy Mir*, Tvardovsky, according to Semen Lipkin, was enthusiastic about the novel, but made the following criticisms: (*1*) the hardships of the populace are described too vividly; (*2*) there is not enough about Stalin; (*3*) there are too many Jews, including a brilliant scientist and a doctor. Grossman would make the necessary changes, Tvardovsky would enlist the support of Fadeyev himself. Members of the

[2] Lev Navrozov, "Solzhenitsyn, Stalin's Victim: A Study in Totalitarianism" (*Midstream*, January 1986). This, and the earlier article, "Solzhenitsyn's World History: *August 1914* as a New *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*" (*Midstream*, June/July 1985), is made newly relevant by the projected publication in English of the "expanded edition" of Solzhenitzyn's *August 1914* (The Bodley Head, London; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York). For an overview of the "nationalism" controversy precipitated by the "expanded edition", see my article "The Solzhenitsyn Affair" (*The Literary Review*, January 1986). Mihajlo Mihajlov, the Yugoslav writer who spent years in Tito's jails, devotes much space to the issue in his forthcoming book *Tyranny and Freedom*.

MEFISTO
JOHN BANVILLE

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Secretariat of the Writers' Union approved the plan, and only Sholokhov—in the '40s he had the "class sense" Gorky lacked in the '30s—sent Tvardovsky a query: "Whom did you entrust with the subject of Stalingrad? Are you nuts? Count me out." The War was over, and Sholokhov felt—as a matter of political reality, not personal prejudice—that "Grossman" and "Stalingrad" (the novel's original title) were an incongruous combination.

On 13 February 1953 *Pravda* published a massive attack by Bubennov, our Vnukovo neighbour to the left, on Grossman's novel. Mentioning in passing the warmth with which the author described "the doctor Sofia Osipovna Levinton"—exactly a month before, on 13 January, *Pravda* had announced the arrest of "the murderers in white gowns"—Bubennov suggested that the earlier, positive reviews of the novel had been the result of "friendly personal associations among some writers". In other words, the Jews; and now Fadeyev was ready to attack Grossman's novel, while Tvardovsky—the same fearless Vnukovo Tvardovsky of the 1960s—would repent before the Secretariat of the Writers' Union for publishing it in his magazine.

Grossman was summoned to the editorial offices of *Pravda*. According to Lipkin, he stopped in to see Tvardovsky on the way, to ask why he had denounced the novel. Tvardovsky exploded: "You still don't understand, do you? Go and see whoever you're seeing, they'll explain it to you." At *Pravda*, the leading Jewish "cultural figures" were drafting a letter to Stalin, to explain that although some Jews, like the doctors who had plotted against him, were homicidal traitors, others were deserving of his mercy as loyal and obedient Soviet citizens. Grossman signed the letter.

To make his humiliation complete, the letter was never sent: according to Ehrenburg, it was "organised" not "from above" but at the initiative of the "cultural figures" themselves. Even if the letter had been an official exercise in repentance, it is virtually certain that Grossman would not have been able to save himself by signing it. Stalin's great design finally touched him, not just the others, and the proverbial scales began to fall from his eyes. This, however, would not have done him much good had it not been for Stalin's death—another external event, which like the War, the Great Designer did not anticipate.

The death of Stalin closed the abyss of infinite moral and physical suffering on the edge of which Grossman found himself standing in the early 1950s. But his glimpse of the abyss was a revelation, a catastrophic insight, that set him on "the journey", to use the expression of a close friend of his, "into the depths of man". The friend was Andrei Platonov, whom Grossman perceived as Chekhov's only heir—and so he was.

Grossman's journey took him back to Stalingrad and found its expression in the form of a sequel to the first novel. "For a Righteous Cause" was a phrase of Molotov's; the title of the sequel, *Life and Fate*, was Grossman's. In addition, before his death in 1964, he wrote a shorter work, the novella *Forever Flowing*.

It was as a Jew that Grossman glimpsed the abyss, and by now he understood that the Jewish pogrom of unprecedented magnitude which Stalin had planned for Russia did not begin—but merely resumed publicly—with the murder of Solomon Mikhoels, chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, in 1949. Had Grossman been a lesser writer, he would have wanted to describe his private hell, his glimpse of the abyss, the tragedy of the man called Grossman and of his people under Stalin. This is what writers who undergo such "conversions", the Sauls turned Pauls, usually do; this is what Solzhenitsyn would do later. Grossman did not want to write about "his people"; he wanted to travel, with Chekhov and Platonov, into the depths of man.

It is clear from Lipkin's memoir that Grossman did not believe—as did Solzhenitsyn and many of the "dissidents" who visited us in Vnukovo—that "a new era" had begun with the death of Stalin. The very title of his novella, *Forever Flowing—Vse techet*, "everything flows, everything changes", the Russian for the *panta rhei* of Heraclitus—would be grim were it not for Grossman's gloss that becomes the book's refrain: "But man remains man." The gloss stands fatalistic pessimism on its head.

Grossman's pessimism, in the everyday, practical sense, was justified. What if Tvardovsky, who had betrayed him once, was now admiring *Life and Fate*? What if Surkov—our Vnukovo neighbour down the street—had recommended that the Soviet Military Publishing House issue *For a Righteous Cause* in book form? What if Fadeyev apologised before the Writers' Union for his attack on Grossman? He knew that what he now had to say would freeze up a thousand thaws. When *Ivan Denisovich* was published, he admired it; but he understood why it was published. And when the manuscripts of *Life and Fate* and *Forever Flowing* were confiscated, "arrested", by the *KGB*, and he was told that his novel "could not be published for another two or three hundred years", he understood why it could not be published.

When *Life and Fate* appeared in French translation in 1983, it sold 150,000 copies. In 1984 the book came out in Italian and in German (selling 10,000 copies on publication), and the following year it was published in England. This year, *Forever Flowing*, originally published in English translation in the US (Harper & Row) in 1972 and in the UK (André Deutsch) in 1973, is being republished by Collins Harvill. It is reasonable to expect that the success of *Life and Fate*, both critical and commercial, will reflect on the other, originally neglected work.[3]

The plot of *Forever Flowing* is simple—I would say austere—and can be retold in one sentence. Ivan Grigoryevich, a man who "for three decades had forgotten that clumps of lilacs still existed", returns from camp to a

[3] *Life and Fate*. By Vasily Grossman. Translated by Robert Chandler. Collins Harvill, £15.00, Flamingo, £5.95; Harper & Row, $22.00. *Forever Flowing*. By Vasily Grossman. Translated by Thomas P. Whitney. Collins Harvill, £10.95; Harper & Row, paper $6.95.

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world where they are in bloom. Through Ivan Grigoryevich's eyes, Grossman sees Soviet society after Stalin. Has anything changed? Ivan Grigoryevich visits his only living relative, an official of science who imagines himself a scientist. He and his wife live in Soviet luxury, but he wants to tell his "dear Vanya":

> " 'Vanya, Vanyechka, it sounds crazy, wild, but I envy you. I envy you because in your terrible camps you did not have to sign vile letters, nor vote for the death of innocent men, nor make foul speeches.'
>
> But now, with Ivan there in front of him, he experienced a sudden turnabout of feeling. This man in a padded jacket, in soldier's shoes, his face eaten away by the cold of Siberia and the foul air of overcrowded camp barracks, struck him as alien, spiteful, hostile. . . .
>
> And just because Nikolai Andreyevich so burned with the desire to say all this to Ivan, he said something quite the contrary:
>
> 'How wonderfully it has all worked out! For the most part, Vanya, we are equals, you and I. Even though there will be times when you feel you have lost whole decades, that you've spent your life for nothing at all. . . . Essentially, Vanyechka, you are the equal of those who move science forward, who have been successful in their life and work.'
>
> He felt his voice trembling with emotion. . . . He loved Ivan. All his life he had loved him. And Mariya Pavlovna felt her husband's greatness of heart more deeply than ever before as he sat there trying to buck up the unfortunate Ivan. . . . [Never] had she felt so fully her triumph in life. This was something quite special—all bound up with her tears for her dead son, with pity and love for that gray-haired man in his crude shoes.
>
> 'Vanya,' she said, 'I have put together a complete wardrobe for you. You are the same height as Kolya.'"

This is a portrait of a man in the tradition of Chekhov, not man before Stalin's death or after, not Soviet or American man, not Jewish or Gentile man, but Everyman, man as philistine, man through the ages, simply man.

In an attempt to place the behaviour of Everyman, which he comprehends as a writer, in the context of historical reality, Grossman devotes a section of his novella to the study of one key phenomenon of totalitarian existence, the police informant. Indeed, destruction of individual freedom cannot be total if people are allowed to "mind their own business", nor is terror effective and complete if people can "count" on anything, even indifference, in their fellow man. Denunciation of one's neighbour becomes Everyman's second nature, and when Grossman asks, "Who was guilty and who is going to answer for it?", he warns us "not to be too hasty" with the reply.

Grossman considers several basic types whom we are likely to condemn as "Judases". The first type has slandered, and sent to their death, innocent people under interrogation. He is now himself back from camp and finds himself ostracised by his brethren:

> "They, to be sure, all have country homes, savings account books, decorations and orders, automobiles. Of course, he is thin and they are fat, but it is perfectly true that they did not behave badly under interrogation. Properly speaking, they couldn't have, because no one interrogated them. They were lucky and no one arrested them. Now where precisely lies the genuine spiritual superiority of these fat people to the thin man?"

What of "Judas the First"?

> "He was an ordinary person. He used to drink tea, eat scrambled eggs, and loved to chat with his friends about books he had read. He used to go to the Moscow Art Theatre. . . .
>
> They really put the heat on him too. They shouted at him, beat him, kept him from sleeping, and gave him nothing to drink while feeding him salt herring and threatening him with death. . . . He returned just barely alive, broken, a pauper, on his last legs. But he had, to be sure, slandered another person."

As Grossman continues his exploration into the motives and the justifications for the behaviour of the other "Judases", we watch with astonishment as the notion of "guilt" begins to fade from our vocabulary of habitual, "meaningful" notions. Men cannot judge one another, says Grossman; they can, and must, judge the forces of history that make them inhuman. It is the nature of totalitarianism that is under indictment here, for human nature is what it has always been. Did not Christ build his Church on the man who denounced him?

Grossman is at his weakest when he stops thinking as a writer. The chapters of *Forever Flowing* in which he attempts to analyse as an historian the historical predicament known as "the Revolution", and its aftermath, are below criticism. Simon Markish in a recent article on Grossman,[4] observes with some irritation that "Vladimir Maximov, the novelist and editor of the Paris-based Russian journal *Kontinent*, has branded Grossman's bitter thoughts on Russian history 'an openly racist declaration'." I would be in agreement with Maximov were it not so patently unfair to judge Grossman as an historian.

Although the basic facts of Stalin's pogrom of the Jews in the 1950s are recounted in the novella in some detail, their sole purpose in the structure of the narrative is to help complete the portrait of Nikolai Andreyevich, the archetypal philistine, by tracing his reactions to them over the years. The true political focus of *Forever Flowing* is Grossman's unparalleled description of the destruction of the peasantry in the Ukraine by Stalin in the early 1930s. It is to describe this, and not what he had himself experienced or could have experienced, that Grossman needed the existential imagination he had acquired in his moments of absolute weakness as an individual.

[4] Simon Markish, "A Russian Writer's Jewish Fate", *Commentary*, April 1986.

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The facts Grossman describes are now well known in the West, although for decades they had lain concealed behind a wall of disinformation erected by Soviet apologists like Walter Duranty, *The New York Times*'s man in Moscow in the '30s. As in the case of so much Soviet history, the palm of scholarship belongs to Robert Conquest, whose book *The Harvest of Sorrow* is the definitive work on the subject.[5] Even here, Grossman's preoccupation is not "the facts", but human experience, and as he describes what Conquest has called "the terror famine" his prose takes on the simplicity and strength of Scripture.

The story of a decimated peasantry is told to Ivan Grigoryevich by a Russian woman with whom he lodges and who later becomes his lover.

> "She had heard him cry out in his sleep, and she had come to him, overflowing with tenderness and pity. There were no tears in her eyes, but he saw in them something more than sympathy. He saw in them what he had never before seen in the eyes of a human being. . . .
>
> She was all goodness, kindness, and he comprehended with his fleshly essence that her tenderness, her warmth, her whisper were beautiful because her heart was full of kindness for him, because love is goodness and kindness."

The pages that follow are more Christian, more "Russian", than anything a Russian Christian could have written—as Osip Mandelstam's poetry is more "classical" than Ovid, as George Orwell's *1984* is a deeper image of the totalitarian ideal than any created by a Russian or a German. When people are described as Grossman describes them, as readers we know that what they tell us is gospel truth, and what Anna Sergeyevna tells Ivan Grigoryevich is just such a truth, in a sense the only kind of truth worth hearing.

According to Lipkin's memoir, Platonov would say to Grossman, "Vasya, you are Christ". I think he meant to convey his admiration for Grossman's all-absorbing preoccupation with the human, his all-consuming desire to travel "into the depths of man." That, indeed, was the triumph of Vasily Grossman, the man who suffered as a Jew and wrote as a Christian.

[5] *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine.* By ROBERT CONQUEST. Hutchinson, £16.95; Oxford University Press, New York, $19.95.

# Tests of Security

## *Hemingway & his Biographers—By ERIC MOTTRAM*

IN 1981 HAROLD BECKER directed a film from Devery Freeman's novel *Father Sky*, entitled *Taps*—one more contribution to the American obsession with the Military Academy, the bravery and honour machine central to the nation's militarism. The plot now turns on the exact centre of another continuing popularity: the novels and legend of Ernest Hemingway—how masculine honour and dignity may be preserved resistant to the immoral brutalities of changing combat structures, the instruments of politics in the declining years of the century. Motivations turn on certain nostalgic dangers that lie in a code of honour, the prospect that honour itself is at best a barely affordable luxury, at worst an insane archaism. Problematically, the honour code includes self-sacrifice for the nation-state and for personal dignity, and proposes an idealist practice of moral behaviour opposed to both imperialistically motivated war and capitalist expansion or greed. In the film, Bunker Hill Military Academy is to be closed by its owners in order to develop the site for profitable condominiums. The cadets use their training in weaponry and honour to defend their school, to the death if necessary. A non-Academy officer provides them with the alternative: a soldier's job is to survive, not to court death.

Hemingway was never a soldier, but to be constantly energised at the edge of danger and death became a necessity at an early age, as his recent biographers continue to demonstrate. He is also an artist who needed an extreme situation to tune experience, and childhood was his first. Larry W. Phillips's rather crudely edited selection of extracts, *Ernest Hemingway on Writing*,[1] includes this sardonic epitome: "What is the best early training for a writer? An unhappy childhood." Thereafter, Hemingway had to choose scenes of nervous embattlement, and recent biographies largely concern relationships between these decisions and their consequences, extending towards his suicide in 1961, an event most carefully documented by Bernice Kert's *The Hemingway Women*,[2] one of the finest books on the writer, not in the least as restrictive as its title might suggest, the result of extensive meetings with six women involved, and expertly free from reductive explanatory determinism.

Biography is ancillary to an artist's creative work, but its

[1] *Ernest Hemingway on Writing.* Edited by LARRY W. PHILLIPS. Granada, £7.95.

[2] *The Hemingway Women.* By BERNICE KERT. W. W. Norton, $20.00, paper $9.95; £8.95.

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popularity is still enormous. Hemingway's American publishers estimate that one million of his books are sold in the United States alone each year. A new novel, *The Garden of Eden*,[3] has just been added to the collection, and some of the relatives have recently founded Hemingway Ltd to market sports goods, including shotguns. The power of the man is marketable myth, partly self-created, partly augmented by cult and industry. But even his lesser texts contain memorable passages of technical skill and existential force which could only be composed by a writer of true authority.

His popularity lies in an ability to simplify and totalise meaning for a complex world whose elements cannot all be known and understood by any single inclusive narrative. A fiction proposed as dramatic enclosure of meaningful behaviour is welcomed. Hemingway is translated into umpteen languages. To be held in a plot of fate, destiny, human helplessness, inevitability, natural selection, and limited dignity is a popular delight across the frontiers of class, race, and nation. Hemingway's translatability is not only a matter of his declarative prose style, but of his conceptual plot of honour, sacrifice, survival, insecure momentary victory and the struggle for "a separate peace" (a phrase he created in 1924) in a world where even the weather seems to be in complicity with human controllers, who in turn are agents of fate. Popular romance is forged in such a constellation of terms, a paradigm of security through which to confront radical insecurity. The popularity of newspapers is their provision, each morning, of an illusion of control: while the populace sleeps, someone has ordered. But "the news" is metanews, in the sense that Hayden White has shown us that history is written always as metahistory:[4] someone has written a narrative of events to demonstrate a plot. History and economics are unreal programmes in a real world. Objectivity is itself a myth, a whip in the fist of some kind of tyrant. Fiction is just as real as any other writing, and just as powerful as an orderer, increasingly so today.

Hemingway knew that death is a fact which information, knowledge and plot cannot alleviate. *Men At War* (1942) begins: "This book will not tell you how to die. Some cheerleaders of war can always get out a pamphlet telling you the best way to go through that small but necessary business at the end." But then he adds his characteristic minimal security inside insecurity: "When you have read it you will know that there are no worse things to be gone through than men have been through before." You may well need "courage", which is related to "dignity", for between these terms is situated the code of honour, tenuous but at the same time a possible behaviour which perpetuates existential values beyond mere stoicism. The Catholic Hemingway surveys the field as the *via media* Lancelot Andrewes does in the 17th century—with a sense of "alone with Alone". Hemingway's contemporary American, T. S. Eliot, cites in his 1926 essay on Andrewes (the year of *The Sun Also Rises*, which uses *The Waste Land* of 1922) an example of the preacher's style which he used in his poem "The Journey of the Magi". It has the declarative clarity Hemingway needed, a form of security through a mastery of the object. Andrewes's Three Wise Men line up with Jake Barnes:

> "It was no summer progress. A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey, and specially a long journey in. The ways deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest off, *in solstitio brumali*, 'the very dead of winter'."

Hemingway is, in addition, one of those American writers who accept war in a Heraclitean sense of essential conflict in existence, from which both destruction and creation may develop. Both Stephen Crane and Charles Olson, in this century, hold this belief, and meet, therefore, the popular belief that conflict is necessary, whether between God and Devil in the battlefield of the human soul and human society, or in some secularised version of that Manichaean origin. But you never give the Enemy the satisfaction all Power or Control desires—to watch panic and other humiliation. A wound is still a red badge of courage, however ironic its infliction, provided it exorcises cowardice.

AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN, Hemingway writes in *Men At War*, he knew that "whatever I had to do men had always done. If they had done it then I could do it too and the best thing was not to worry about it." From the British officer he met in hospital, he obtained a key passage from *Henry IV*, Part 2, which he was to use throughout his career:

> "By my troth, I care not: a man can die but once; we owe God a death; I'll ne'er bear a base mind: an't be my destiny, so; an't be not, so; no man's too good to serve his prince; and let it go which way it will, he that dies this year is quit for the next."

Chapter 6 of Carlos Baker's *Hemingway: A Life Story* (1969) gave the moment when Major Eric Dorman-Smith wrote down this "permanent protecting talisman" for his American friend. He was one of what Jeffrey Meyers, in *Hemingway: A Biography*,[5] calls Hemingway's "expert teachers". The list is long and varied. Each teacher has to do with technique and skill to prevent mediocrity and manipulation. Part of Hemingway's popularity arises from his hope that trained ability in fighting and sport, as well as in writing, will confer a degree of exemption from the commonplace, so that the heroic may emerge, however small, however temporary. A legendary aura will then support the individual and his or her supporters. For the ideal Hemingway, as distinct from the everyday man in his faults, there could be a coded language in which the bullfighter's and the writer's courage for truth could meet. This is the gist of *Death in the Afternoon* (1932). Chapter 2 of Professor Meyers's large and massively docu-

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[3] *The Garden of Eden*. By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. Charles Scribner's Sons, $18.95; to be published in Britain in spring 1987 by Hamish Hamilton, £9.95.

[4] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in 19th-Century Europe* (1973).

[5] *Hemingway: A Biography*. By JEFFREY MEYERS. Macmillan, £16.95.

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mented study exposes the initial circumstances in World War I that Hemingway used immediately after in Chicago to constitute himself a hero in the image he needed: a man exonerated from faults by an honourable wound received in an extreme situation, at the edge of death. Meyers shows thirteen unsigned stories for the *Kansas City Star* which "anticipate" that act as well as "his later fictional interest in boxing, crime, violence, heroism, suicide and death."

Hemingway was eighteen. Rejected by the Army (for defective eyesight), he became a Red Cross ambulance driver. Wounded by a shell explosion while handing out chocolate in the trenches, he gained an Italian medal for his subsequent heroic, sacrificial behaviour. Then his imagination created the persona he needed to justify his existence: an act almost commonplace among men under pressure to be model men. Years later, in *Men At War*, the issue emerges again. The imaginative writer needs skills the man of action must avoid. The connections between true prose and true sport or fight can never be finally established. They must constantly be re-encountered, rewritten. These are the circumstances of the creative, and the latest biographies attempt seriously to understand them. Hemingway's books are another matter:

> "A writer's job is to tell the truth. His standard of fidelity to the truth should be so high that his invention, out of his experience, should produce a truer account than anything factual can be. For fact can be observed badly; but when a good writer is creating something, he has time and scope to make it an absolute truth."

This is the nature of the writer's "good name". The soldier cannot be a writer in war, nor in his other roles as man of action—a Hemingway belief Meyers cannot always respect:

> "He knows that nothing happens until it actually happens and you live your life up until then. Danger only exists at the moment of danger. . . . Cowardice, as distinguished from panic, is almost always simply a lack of ability to suspend the functioning of the imagination. Learning to suspend your imagination and live completely in the very second of the present minute with no before and no after is the greatest gift a soldier can acquire. It, naturally, is the opposite of all those gifts a writer should have."

The consequences of this separation for Hemingway's career are not always as guiding a factor in Meyers's book as they might be. Nor is its crucial philosophical appearance in Chapter 37 of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, written when Hemingway was in his early forties. Through Robert Jordan, the existential moment becomes a crux of transcendence beyond insecurities of "men at war" and men at writing. Men and women are released from history and temporality, and the moment is both erotic and mental or linguistic, a later translation of "a separate peace" and a temporary cancellation of "alone with Alone". The condition of *nada* in "A Clean Well-Lighted Place" becomes a little more bearable. Time in the watch on Jordan's wrist is almost checked by the sexual "now" with Maria, who senses it as "*la gloria*", and Jordan identifies that further with the essential quality in the art of the *Cante Hondo*, the *Suetas*, Greco and


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San Juan de la Cruz. The horror of defeat—far worse than anything for Hemingway—is suspended.

THE CHANCES OF DEFEAT are overwhelming for many people in this century. Hemingway acknowledges that, and for many readers helps them to confront it. It is central to *The Dangerous Summer*,[6] which at last appeared—in part—in 1985 (Meyers thinks it "flat, wordy, smug"). Hemingway draws close to the bullfighters once again as examples of his ideal: the human dignity of constant renewal through danger, "close enough to give the feeling of the nearness of tragedy within the marvellous security." To escape from security; to escape from insecurity; Hemingway lived and wrote in that plot. This book is not smug.

But the massive American late 20th-century biography plots the biographer's drive towards total fictional coherence. Professor Meyers appends a chart of his subject's accidents, wounds and illnesses from "childhood: falls with stick in throat, gouges tonsils" to a car "accident" in 1959 and a list of fourteen illnesses and probable illnesses between 1959 and 1961. There can be no accidents in metabiography. In such a control structure, car and plane crashes are destiny signposts. Total meaning exhibits the power of the biographer as Control. The voluntary aspect of a life is subsumed in a gapless plot to which personal action and historical events conspire, without coincidence or accident. This is the work of a professional biographer (T. E. Lawrence, Orwell, Katherine Mansfield, Wyndham Lewis) who disapproves of his subject's attempts to manufacture his life before the biographer got to it. Meyers is convinced that, "like his heroes Twain and Kipling, Hemingway never matured as an artist" but became ruined by "a pervasive display of vanity and self-pity . . . an inability to create a reflective character, a tendency to act out fantasies." He would have preferred his subject to have died in a cataract or "among wild elephants", and so on, rather than continue towards suicide. After *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, nothing Hemingway wrote is worth much.

If you agree with all this, the book will confirm your criticism as well as collect evidence. Carlos Baker's biography is less structured by Freud and other totalising devices, and therefore more balanced between criticism and appreciation, but Meyers draws on recently researched materials and holds a more resistant stance to legend of the writer as sacred monster. The fiction is significant largely because it instances the life. The outcome also resists the kind of biography Leon Edel epitomised in his essay "Biography and the Sexual Revolution: Why Curiosity Is No Longer Vulgar" (*New York Times Book Review*, 24 November 1985):

> "The craft of biography calls for discretion. It relies on a sense of perspective, of measure, on the ability to evaluate evidence that is often delicate and frequently shadowy, on a respect for fundamental human considerations. Only if they demonstrate these qualities will the written lives of great (or at least unique) human beings take their place with the classical narratives of the past."

The publisher's blurb quotes a suggestion that Meyers's book resembles "Richard Avedon's pitiless photographs of celebrities", and certainly his lighting is harsh and stereotyping. That is his device, and the reader decides accordingly. But would a reader seeking to know how and why Hemingway's work changed the ways fiction is written, and the nature of his global popularity, gain help from this book?

NATURALLY, WE ARE INTERESTED in Hemingway's origins, even if we are not so much concerned with rigid causal relationships from then on. Peter Griffin's account of those early years, *Along with Youth*,[7] incorporates Mary Hemingway's informative cooperation, and understands, without being self-righteously affronted, that a distinguished writer may be insensitive to some people, careless and vulnerable—like millions of other people, in fact. The book is generous to Hemingway's coming-of-age as a reporter; to his First World War experiences; to his need to be a post-War dandy, lecturing to civic groups on war; and to his work for the Chicago *Commonwealth Cooperative*, as well as to the dance-contest winner and to the large number of letters exchanged between Hadley Richardson and Hemingway.

MICHAEL REYNOLDS'S *The Young Hemingway*[8] covers this same early period and is especially detailed and useful on the Oak Park, Illinois, environment, the standards which controlled the family, the father's struggle against depression, the mother's strain to develop her own life and maintain her beliefs within the family, and the contradictions in class and caste in bourgeois urban America.

It was from this conservative training that Hemingway launched himself into the insecurities of city reporting and the war in Italy. Like millions of other men, he needed a military image of manhood which would fulfil the insistencies of society. Reynolds fully documents but carefully refrains from prodding his materials towards moral and aesthetic judgments. He combines clear analysis with a sense of his subject's effect:

> "From d'Annunzio, T. E. Lawrence of Arabia and Lord Byron, Hemingway gradually developed a public role for the writer in his time: a physical, passionate, active life balanced against the contemplative life while actually writing. The public role that developed was nothing short of disastrous for American literature: the writer not only had to write well and honestly, he also had to test himself in a crucible of fear and danger. He eventually defined for his time how an American writer should live, and more

---

[6] *The Dangerous Summer*. By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. Hamish Hamilton, £9.95.

[7] *Along with Youth*. By PETER GRIFFIN. Oxford University Press, New York, $17.95, £12.95.

[8] *The Young Hemingway*. By MICHAEL REYNOLDS. Basil Blackwell, £14.95.

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than a few post-Hemingway writers would destroy their talent trying to follow in his large footsteps."

Both Griffin and Reynolds end about 1921, while Professor Meyers concludes with the 1961 suicide—which aptly fits *his* conclusion: Hemingway lived a life of Oedipal guilt, a need for wounds suspiciously resembling malingering, and, to judge from Meyers's interpretation of the bullfight, a constant resistance to homosexuality: "the matador's triumphant domination of the bull as the moment of orgasmic death represents a virile defence against the threat of homosexuality." "The world of war was attractive to Hemingway", we are informed, "because it removed women, the greatest source of anxiety." A reading of Bernice Kert's book exposes the simplification of that judgment.

Meyers is useful on Hemingway's struggle to write in his later life of perpetual disabilities. His life did indeed become difficult to those loyal to him, and to himself. But surely part of his heroism was that he managed to write well in spite of old age. Those elements which Meyers states early in his book remained: "his craving for experience, need to test his body and desire to show his courage." But it was that area of work so difficult for a biographer to place steadily in the forefront of a writer's biography—the long hours of disciplined writing, the shaping of plots, style and character, the fears of the impossibility of creating the necessary fictive "architecture"—that also wore Hemingway down.

Josephine Herbst, in her finely written record of Americans in the Spanish Civil War[9]—not used by Meyers—remembered Hemingway in Barcelona under fire, and the historical and personal intersections of the time and place, missed by any biographer at his peril:

> ". . . the last war in which individuals were to enter with their individual might. But what a welter of conflicting views this implies! The soldier is not only fighting *against* an enemy but also for some beyond. But no war can be a purifying fire. Individuals cannot fight as individuals and conflicting visions bring a conflict of will and design."

Hemingway clung to a belief in simple and "clean" issues which both Herbst and John Dos Passos knew to be crumbling. Herbst the artist knows the difficult circumstances of creativity, and sympathises. The writing is exemplary:

> "Hemingway, like a good many others, was undergoing some kind of transformation, and part of the reason he had come to Spain was doubtless because the forces of that process were already at work. . . . He wanted to be *the* war writer of his age and he knew it and went toward it. War gave answers that could not be found in that paradise valley of Wyoming where he had fished or even in the waters of Key West when the tarpon struck. What was the deeper reality *there* was in an extreme form *here*, and to get to it he had to be in it and he knew it.
>
> He was a real friend to the Spanish; he had donated an ambulance and had come as a correspondent. He was promoting the film, *Spanish Earth*. . . . But in annexing new realms of experience, Hemingway was entering into some areas that were better known to people like Dos Passos, or even myself. He seemed to be naively embracing on the simpler levels the current ideologies at the very moment when Dos Passos was urgently questioning them."

But he kept at his writing, the core of his life: "When you passed Hemingway's room, you heard the busy sound of his typewriter."

Rightly, Warren Susman places this account centrally in the section on the 1930s in *Culture as History* (1984) as a key part of a declining "ability to make some commitment, to associate with some idea of culture." Michael Reynolds understands this, too; other biographers tend to imitate Carlyle's conviction that history is "the essence of innumerable biographies". Hemingway continually sought the means of survival in creative dignity—that is the point of "Big Two-Hearted River"; a man damaged by war searches for recovery in skills other than war, in a landscape unpolluted by imperialism. Professor Meyers faults the story precisely where other readers find it clear: "the radical omission of an essential element, which remained hidden beneath the surface of the story, left the meaning unclear."

There is a letter to Fitzgerald in 1929—briefly excerpted by

[9] Josephine Herbst, "The Starched Blue Sky of Spain", *The Noble Savage*, No. 1 (New York, 1960).

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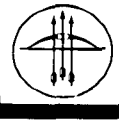

**ANDRE DEUTSCH**

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Meyers, even less quoted by Phillips—on how to expect and counter that depression which Hemingway calls "The Artist's Reward":

> "Summer's a discouraging time to work—You don't feel death coming in the way it does in the fall when the boys really put pen to paper. Everybody loses all the bloom—we're not peaches—that doesn't mean you get rotten—a gun is better worn and with the bloom off—So is a saddle—People too by God. You lose everything that is fresh and everything that is easy and it always seems as though you could *never* write—But you have more *metier* and you know more and when you get flashes of the old juice you get more results with them. . . . You just have to *go on* when it is worst and most helpless. . . ."

That advice is enough plot for a life. A biographer must take care not to replace or displace the texts of his subject with another, lesser and totalising text for the market and the academy. And he must resist the characteristic American desire to personalise, and thereby reduce, events. Meyers is at his best on Hemingway's political record, therefore: "Hemingway's direct and vivid involvement with statesmen and historical events during 1922-3 determined his mature political ideas." Edmund Wilson grasped this back in 1947, in *The Wound and the Bow*: Hemingway was the "gauge of morale":

> "His whole work is a criticism of society: he has responded to every pressure of the moral atmosphere of the time, as it is felt at the roots of human relations, with a sensitivity almost unrivalled."

One consequence Meyers quotes from Morley Callaghan: Hemingway "was willing to be ruthless with himself or with anything or anybody that got in the way of the perfection of his work."

THESE CHARACTERISTICS are still present in *The Garden of Eden*. David Bourne, a young writer, is still struggling to write, and to understand his father—not as some Oedipal thug but as a hunter

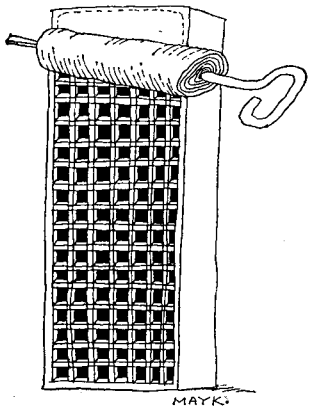
> ". . . who ran his life more disastrously than any man that he had ever known . . . who gave marvellous advice . . . distilled out of the bitter mash of all his previous mistakes with the freshening addition of the new mistakes he was about to make and he gave it with an accuracy and precision that carried the authority of a man who had heard all the more grisly provisions of his sentence and gave it no more importance than he had given to the fine print on a transatlantic steamship ticket."

Bourne knows he is "not a tragic character, having his father and being a writer barred him from that." A beautiful summary, and it may remind us of Hemingway's letter to Robert Cantwell in 1950:

> "I asked both Cape and Scribners not to use any publicity about any military service and it is distasteful to me to mention it and destroys any pride I have in it. I want to run as a writer; not as a man who had been to wars; nor a bar room fighter; nor a shooter; nor a horse-player; nor a drinker. I would like to be a straight writer and be judged as such.
>
> What difference does it make if you live in a picturesque little out house surrounded by 300 feeble minded goats and your faithful dog Black Dog? The question is: can you write?"

# The Heritage Mentality

## *Fearing Modern Architecture—By J. M. RICHARDS*




HERITAGE is a perfectly respectable word. According to the dictionary it simply means what is or may be inherited. But it has become an escape-word, used to justify our urge to escape from having to decide what we think about architecture, and from taking a positive view of the manner in which we should now build.

Bookshops and publishers' lists are increasingly loaded with books that can only be classified under the generic—and now hackneyed—term: heritage books. Some, it should be said, are serious works of architectural history. There is always new research to be recorded—for example *The English House*, by Gavin Stamp,[1] an account of an influential group of English architects' return to their own vernacular traditions, a phenomenon only now finding a place in historical writing. There are also out-of-print history books to be reissued, and in any case architectural history, like political and other kinds of history, requires rewriting every generation or so. *The Rise of the Gothic*, by William Anderson,[2] for instance, is an attempt to take a fresh look at the achievement represented by Gothic architecture in the

[1] *The English House 1860-1914*. By GAVIN STAMP and ANDRÉ GOULANCOURT. Faber and Faber, £25.00.

[2] *The Rise of the Gothic*. By WILLIAM ANDERSON. Photography by CLIVE HICKS. Hutchinson, £20.00.

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Middle Ages, especially as symbolising a new relationship between man and his religion. The major examples have been re-photographed in detail by Clive Hicks.

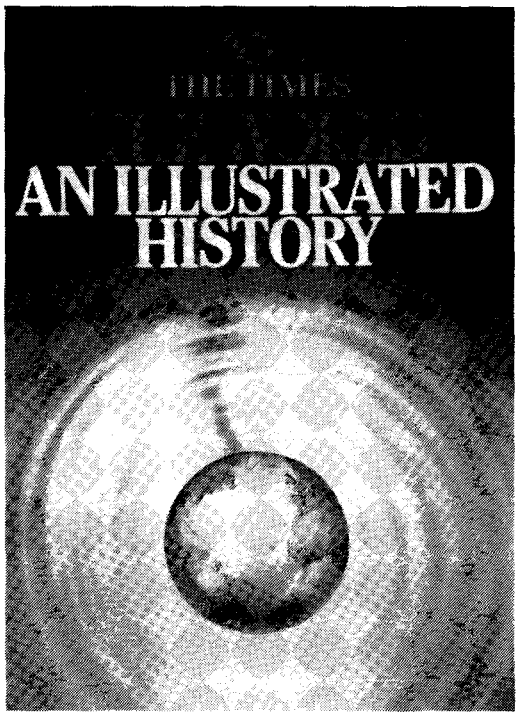
Then there is the new series now being issued by Faber: their *History of World Architecture* of which the first four volumes, on Gothic, Renaissance, Late Baroque and Rococo, and Byzantine architecture,[3] have just appeared, and fourteen more are to follow. These are abridged translations of an Italian series published some years ago by Electa of Milan, which covers similar ground to several other series such as *The Great Ages of World Architecture*, published by Braziller of New York, and the *Living Architecture* series published by Oldbourne (both in the 1960s), and the excellent handbooks published over the years by Thames & Hudson. All these are serious and scholarly, a useful addition to anyone's reference library.

All heritage books are not therefore to be despised. But a great many are superficial and contribute nothing, and it is the continuing repetition of the same story, illustrated as often as not by the same examples, and its undoubted popular appeal (or publishers would not be so assiduous in responding to it) that must be looked at as a symptom of nervousness and indecision about what our present architecture should be like.

One ought to be able to say this without undermining the present very necessary efforts to see that more care is taken of the best of our architecture that survives from the past—in fact our architectural heritage. The rate at which this has been destroyed in the last generation or two is a disgrace, which is now to some extent acknowledged; hence the recent growth of preservation societies and the campaigns to save threatened buildings, many of which campaigns—though not enough—have been successful. For although there are still too many good buildings under threat, the situation has without doubt improved, more as a result of the efforts of organisations like the Georgian Group and the Victorian Society (to whom our debt is incalculable) than as a result of official protection or of a more enlightened view taken by local authorities and property developers. One cannot conceive that London's monumental gateway to the North, popularly known as the Euston Arch though it was not in fact an arch, which was demolished for no adequate reason in 1962, would suffer the same fate today. On the other hand, what is to be the fate of St George's Hall, Liverpool, perhaps the greatest English building of the early 19th century, now unwanted and neglected by the city that owns it?

Nevertheless, important though such buildings are, my concern in this essay is not so much the fate of major monuments, of which we probably manage to keep as many as previous generations have kept, nor even the fate of minor ones, which are of great importance as elements in our townscape, which I shall come to in a moment. My concern is with our identification of architecture almost wholly with the

[3] *Renaissance Architecture*. By PETER MURRAY. *Gothic Architecture*. By LOUIS GRODECKI. *Late Baroque and Rococo Architecture*. By CHRISTIAN NORBERG-SCHULZ. *Byzantine Architecture*. By CYRIL MANGO. Faber and Faber/Electa, £12.95.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past. Of this our obsession with what is called our heritage is a symptom. To too many people the word architecture *means* the architecture of the past. A man who says he is interested in architecture means that he is interested in old buildings; he visits them and buys heritage books—which is admirable; without him the preservation societies would not have gained the support they have. But if his grandfather, and still more his great-grandfather, had claimed an interest in architecture, they would have meant a forward-looking regard for what was being built in their time: at best an interest in developing possibilities; at worst an appreciation of new fashions. Of course the 18th and 19th centuries had their antiquarians, but a fascination for the past did not close their minds to the changing opportunities of the present.

In our generation the opposite seems to be true. Our growing efforts to look after old buildings are to be admired and supported and their conservation should be a continuing preoccupation; but it should not be fuelled by fear of what will take its place if an old building has to go. If we have not the confidence to look forward as well as back, future generations will find nothing that we have built worth making efforts in their turn to preserve.

It is easy to say this, but we cannot cure ourselves of our habit of looking only backwards simply by deciding that to do so is unconstructive. We must consider its cause. There are some causes that lead us far away from architecture—causes related to our changed position in the world which makes us value the past because we then had a position we cannot now see ourselves recapturing, and which makes tourism our major growth industry (if our status does not justify monumental new buildings at least we can enjoy, and make a profit from, showing off our old ones). But our backward-looking architectural habits have other causes, related to architecture itself.

To identify one of these we must remind ourselves that architecture is a visual art. Taking a constructive interest in it requires a trained eye—not the eye of the trained architect, which is something different, but a *practised* eye, in the same way that an appreciative interest in literature requires practice in reading though not necessarily the creative abilities of a writer. Practice in reading is part of everyone's education, but not practice in *seeing*, and the literary bias in our educational system is undoubtedly one cause of the difficulty non-specialists have in including architecture among the things on which they are able to make confident personal judgments. So we prefer to rely on old judgments and look back to old buildings—using our eyes, of course, but not to discriminate. Heritage books have told us what to admire, and we use our eyes to enjoy it without having to make visual judgments in order to do so.

That is only one of the difficulties. Another lies in the confused picture presented by all architecture except that illustrated in the heritage books. Directly one protests that valuing the past should not mean mistrusting the future, one comes up against the confusing spectacle that modern architecture presents to the man in the street, who can hardly be blamed for turning his back on so bewildering and frequently repellent a picture. He gets no help from the architectural profession, on whom in fact, and on the absence of intelligent patronage by non-architects, the blame must chiefly rest. The profession appears to have lost its way, and lost at the same time the courage of the convictions it had only a generation ago.

This is not a defence of *all* those convictions. The so-called Modern Movement in architecture is itself now part of history; in some ways therefore part of our heritage and no more an answer to our present needs than the movement that produced the Tudor mansion or the Gothic Revival chapel. It produced only a few first-rate buildings, and these were never admired by more than a small minority; yet it represents a moment in history that concerns us today because it was the moment when many people were frightened away from an architecture they no longer understood—people who have given up trying to understand it ever since. They were simultaneously frightened away from painting and sculpture by equivalent developments in those arts, but that had no influence on their support or rejection of the whole environment they inhabited, the difference lying in architecture's inescapable presence and the social, as well as aesthetic, values it incorporates.

The circumstances in which the Modern Movement was generated are largely misunderstood, and it is blamed for developments that did not necessarily follow from its precepts. The ugliness popularly associated with it would have occurred anyway. It arose from an unprecedented increase in the bulk of urban buildings due to high land values and other economic factors, and from architects finding themselves unable to handle the new problems—or at least those architects who were given a chance to do so. The arrival of these problems coincided with the decline of intelligent patronage on the part of those who commissioned new buildings, who made their choice of architects for business or administrative reasons rather than because of their designing ability—and who still do. Architects at the same time insisted on employing new building techniques and materials because of their convenience and cheapness without understanding their limitations. Such a combination of circumstances was responsible for the hideously transformed urban picture which, along with the growth of high-density housing, has been the chief cause of the popular dislike of contemporary architecture.

The Modern Movement's claim to artistic justification in the 1920s and 1930s was that it represented a cleansing or liberating process, for which a need had arisen because the profession of architecture was led at the time by an academic older generation practising a competent, often scholarly, Georgian style ill-adapted to changing building needs, and one unable to adapt to new techniques. But the modernist protest against aesthetic conservatism was a far less fundamental cause of the upheaval that then took place than the academic architects' reluctance to involve themselves not simply in changes of style but in the changes the

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times demanded in the very role played by the architect.

The Modern Movement, although it made its impact on the public eye, and acquired its reputation for iconoclasm, through discarding the historic styles, was basically a movement for change in the nature of the architect's responsibilities. The leaders of the profession in the 1920s and the 1930s took no interest in the part architects could play in, for example, controlling urban growth and thus preserving a civilised environment. Among the most destructive developments of the 1920s were the new demands made by industry, the spread of mass housing and the ribbon development along country roads that followed highly necessary slum-clearance programmes and improvements in transport. The architectural profession had turned its back on all these. Industry was in the hands of engineers and housing in the hands of builders either instructed by local authorities or working speculatively but in either case with very little qualified architectural guidance. Just a few enlightened authorities (like the London County Council) were responsible for public housing that was socially and architecturally respectable. There was not yet a recognised town-planning profession.

It was the architects of the Modern Movement who, following the lead of a few turn-of-the-century pioneers, tried to persuade the architectural profession to accept these wider responsibilities. The first report of the Modern Movement's initial attempt at policy-making, the Athens Charter, issued in 1933 by the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* following discussion meetings in various parts of Europe, was not concerned with the design of buildings, and still less with their style, but with the future planning of towns and their adaptation to new needs and problems. Thereafter the whole emphasis of the Modern Movement was on the creation of a better environment, a change of direction still bearing fruit today in the shape of many architects' preoccupation with community planning.

In the 1920s and 1930s architects thus took a new look at themselves, but although the result was a more socially oriented profession, another result was visual chaos. The urge to redefine the role of the architect, accompanied by pressure to discard the vocabulary on which architecture had relied for centuries—pressure arising from fashion, from economics, from technology and from the desire to help create the brave new world that stimulated so many people's imagination at this time—left the ordinary architect without aesthetic guidance. A minority with creative genius could endow the new types of building and the new techniques they employed with qualities that made them into real architecture, but the others were left stranded with no rules to follow or with a set of ready-made rules increasingly unsuited to the types of building they were expected to design.

THE MAN IN THE STREET, whose eye had not been trained to discriminate, lost contact altogether between what he had been accustomed to regard as


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architecture and what he saw all round him. He began to feel that these clumsy, characterless buildings, often of overpowering size, were the inescapable product of the changes taking place in architecture, little though they had to do with the aims and objects of the Modern Movement. It is not surprising that the public became nostalgic for the more comfortable architecture of the past, and lapsed into its present obsession with architecture as heritage.

These reactions on the part of the public against what it saw around it were strengthened by another development associated with the Modern Movement, for which its British devotees in the profession must take far more blame than for their too-ready acceptance of new materials or for copying Continental ways of using them. This was their enthusiasm, again encouraged by visions of a brave new world, for sweeping everything old away in order to build anew, for destroying half the town in order to plan it better. As a result, public alarm about changes in architecture became public consternation about a totally changed environment, which concerned people far more closely.

If we have learnt any lessons in recent years they are not connnected with appreciating new styles of building but with the necessity of weaving the new into the old. The value of the conservation movement lies less, in my view, in the individual buildings it helps to save from demolition than in the emphasis it has taught us all to place on continuity, on the need to maintain the character of places by keeping enough of the old to counteract the strangeness of the new. It adds to the discomforts of an insecure world when even something as solid as architecture can no longer be relied on.

Variety is the essence of an enjoyable townscape, and a look round any town will demonstrate that an ugly building, new or old, can often enhance a townscape by reason of its colour or silhouette more than a beautiful one. This should be borne in mind when it comes to deciding about preserving—or not preserving—the more ordinary buildings. Their role in the townscape should be the overriding consideration, not the period they belong to. Sometimes the preservation societies try too hard to preserve second-rate buildings simply because of their date. Of course we must preserve the masterpieces, but for buildings that are less than masterpieces what they contribute to the total scene should be the criterion.

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To have ruptured the sense of historical continuity in the environment is thus one of the failures on the part of the architectural profession in recent years. Another, as I have indicated, is the profession's failure to master the new techniques and materials—or, rather, their insistence on using them when they have not yet mastered them. It is right that new techniques and materials should be absorbed into the architect's vocabulary, and in Britain there are not only some good architects who have used them well, but also a small number who, having rejected them, continue to build traditionally and well. It is with the former that the future lies, for never in the past have architects built less skilfully than they knew how. It has always been their responsibility, however, to ensure that new techniques are used with knowledge and judgment. Architects' failure in the post-War years to maintain mastery of their materials has been a professional disgrace. If the public cannot rely on roofs not leaking and new buildings not requiring constant repair, there is something wrong with the architects' training or their sense of professional responsibility. If they cannot use new materials properly they had better not use them at all. But someone will, because they are there to be used and are probably cheaper; then an even more uneducated use of them will result.

STRANGELY, THE ONE RECENT development that architects are most angrily blamed for, and which has driven people to look nostalgically to the past, is one for which they in fact bear only a small part of the responsibility. This is the disastrous policy, in the 1950s and '60s, of building cheap tower blocks as the main contribution to solving the country's housing shortage—blocks lacking the quality or the amenities that make multi-storey housing acceptable in other countries. The horrors of the high-density housing estates of those years, which we now regret and resent to the extent that we blow them up to get rid of them, were not conceived mainly by architects in spite of the prominent place high building took in the early propaganda of the Modern Movement. In Britain most of them were the outcome of local-authority decisions based on an anxiety to achieve politically impressive rehousing figures. Local authorities were persuaded to employ these means by their speed of construction, by an unwise governmental policy of granting greater financial subsidies to high-rise housing, and by high-pressure salesmanship on the part of the proprietors of prefabricated building systems and of contractors who could use them profitably.

It can be said, of course, that these pressures should have been resisted by the architects employed by local authorities, since it was their responsibility to warn of the risks inherent in untried building systems and in the unceasing pressure to cut costs—disastrous policies which we may now feel the council architects of the time should not have failed to foresee, and should have resisted even at the cost of their jobs. In the case of far too many housing schemes, features in the original design that would have made them habitable were eliminated one by one to save money: good materials, good landscaping, soundproofing between flats, a sufficient number of lifts and caretakers, easily accessible shops and nursery-schools

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—in fact all the amenities that are taken for granted in, for example, Scandinavia, where living in high-density housing schemes, often incorporating tower blocks, is accepted and enjoyed except by families with small children who are better near the ground. Such flats are well planned and well provided. The housing schemes that have earned modern architecture such a bad name in Britain were slums from the time they were built.

HOWEVER DISCOURAGING such experiences may have been, frontiers must still be pushed forward; the familiar answers no longer serve. For example we have not enough land round our cities to respond to our despair at recent housing failures by rehousing ourselves only in cottages. We used to be good at building towns, and the place of architecture in the urban environment is still, I think, what needs our closest attention. For several good reasons modern buildings are plain—in fact dull in themselves. Their repetitive role ensures this; the most prominent buildings, like blocks of offices, all serve the same purpose and have no need to display themselves individually like cathedrals. Their architects should not strive to make each one a monument. Yet the man in the street has a natural desire for detail and variety. Can he not more appropriately find these in the townscape with its mixture of old and new than in the bits and pieces borrowed from earlier styles of building so arbitrarily introduced by the Post-Modernists as though designing a building were like shopping in a supermarket?

Pushing frontiers forward need not—must not—mean turning our backs on the best of the past, but if we cannot keep a balance between care for our heritage and support for new architectural achievements, the art of architecture will stagnate. Boring new developments, indistinguishable between one town and another, and uninhabitable tower housing are what have set the public against modern architecture, so that the eye for good architecture which the educated once had is turned almost wholly on the past. This may serve a good purpose by helping to preserve what is best in the past, but it is death to the creative spirit. Previous generations borrowed from the past without turning their backs on the present. Today we take refuge in the heritage mentality and are in danger of all becoming passive tourists when we should be active and appreciative patrons.

## The Bride's Nights in a Strange Village

At three in the morning
while mist limps between houses
while cloaks and blankets
dampen with dew

the bride sleeps with her husband
bundled in a red blanket.
Her mouth parts and a bubble
of sour breathing goes free.
She humps wool up to her ears
while her husband tightens his arms
and rocks her, mumbling, but neither awakes.

In the second month of the marriage
the bride wakes after midnight.
Damp-bodied
she lunges from sleep
hair pricking with sweat
breath knocking her sides.
She eels from her husband's grip
and crouches, listening.

The night is enlarged by sounds.
The rain has started.
It threshes leaves secretively
and there in the blackness
of whining dogs it finds out the house.
Its sounds enfold her, blot up
her skin then sift off, whispering
in her like mirrors
the length of the rainy village.

*Helen Dunmore*

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# Books Encountered

**Government Against the People.** By RODNEY ATKINSON. Compuprint Publishing (4 Sands Road, Swalwell Industrial Estate, Tyne and Wear NE16 3DJ), £9.

Extreme but only superficially dotty indictment of corporatist tendencies in all governments, Left or Right, arguing that "market democracy" and consumer power need to be greatly increased to offset the inadequacy of constitutional safeguards.

**Filthy Lucre or The Tragedy of Andrew Ledwhistle and Richard Soleway.** By BERYL BAINBRIDGE. Duckworth, £8.95.

Bloodthirsty juvenilia by a distinguished novelist, then aged 13, with scratchy drawings: the intrigue ranges from Ludgate Hill to Old Virginny, and involves impersonation and dire revenge. As a curiosity, it veers between *Treasure Island* and *The Young Visiters*.

**In the Footsteps of Lawrence of Arabia.** By CHARLES BLACKMORE. Harrap, £9.95.

Honest, downbeat diary of a month spent by four young soldiers of the Royal Green Jackets (two officers, two other ranks) retracing part of T. E. Lawrence's World War I itinerary. It was rougher than they expected: but the illustrations match David Lean's film.

**As No Other Dare Fail: For Samuel Beckett on his 80th Birthday by his Friends and Admirers.** Edited by JOHN CALDER. John Calder, £10.95.

Affectionate tributes and sometimes learned essays from such as Martin Esslin, Richard Ellmann, and Charles Monteith, plus many less well known, and Billie Whitelaw. The goodies also include a short piece by Beckett and a score of photographs, several of the master himself.

**The Illustrated Mayhew's London.** Edited by JOHN CANNING. Introduced by ASA BRIGGS. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

A pungent selection from the four-volume 1861-62 *London Labour and the London Poor*, with Beard's original engravings supplemented by many other pictures, some from Doré, some from paintings reproduced in colour, and some from early photographs, perhaps the most touching of all.

**A Glimpse of the Ancient Sunlight: Memories of Henry Williamson.** By SUE CARON. Aylesford Press (158 Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral, Cheshire), £3.20.

Minute, admiring memoir of Williamson in old age by a girl who became his lover soon after they met in 1964. The most illuminating passages recreate his conversation about composing the novel-series, *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight*.

**No End of a Lesson: Leading articles from *The Times*, under CHARLES DOUGLAS-HOME.** Alliance Publishers, for the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, £7.50.

A trenchant and honourable tribute and memorial to a courageous editor who died in harness, from cancer. Most of the editorials cover strategy and international affairs, but some deal with ethics and religion. They backed the Falklands expedition, supported SDI, and deplored Labour's deepening of Atlantic rifts.

**State of the Ark.** By LEE DURRELL. The Bodley Head, £12.95.

Sumptuous, indispensable atlas of the world's despoliation and its partial, belated rescue, by Mrs Gerald Durrell and an expert conservation team. Its ten tips for individual action include limiting your family, vetting your lifestyle, recycling waste, protecting your locality, learning, lobbying, and funding.

**Sundry Times.** By FRANK GILES. John Murray, £13.95.

Slightly subfusc autobiography by the former editor of *The Sunday Times*, who earlier had been ADC to a colonial Governor, a temporary recruit to the Foreign Office, and a foreign correspondent of *The Times*. He tells the Hitler diaries hoax story with rueful humour, chiefly blaming *Stern* and poor communications within Times Newspapers.

**Writing Against: A Biography of Sartre.** By RONALD HAYMAN. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

Well-researched but unanalytical life, rivalling but not quite displacing that by Annie Cohen-Solal, published in France last year, although it includes much additional testimony. Hayman sees Sartre's (and de Beauvoir's) message as "You make your own life". Literary criticism would take another and different book.

**Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties 1960-75.** By ROBERT HEWISON. Methuen, £14.95.

Hectic, crowded completion of the trilogy which began with *Under Siege: Literary Life in London 1939-45*, still the best of the three, because in longer perspective. The closer to the present, the more frequent the faded buzz-words; but this is still a useful compilation and time-capsule.

**Giving it Away: Memoirs of an Uncivil Servant.** By CHARLES OSBORNE. Secker & Warburg, £15.

St Sebastian rides again: the former Director of the Literature Department of the Arts Council answers his critics and deprived grantees. Fascinating on the literary infighting and in an often bitchy anecdotal gazetteer entitled "Name-Dropping". Only a fly on the wall could reveal much more.

**Anthony Eden.** By ROBERT RHODES JAMES. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.95.

Sympathetic, authorised biography by an accomplished historian and highly individual Tory MP, judiciously criticising Eden's between-two-stools position *vis-à-vis* the United States and uniting Europe, and defending the rationale of Suez, 1956. Then, it concludes, "The Israelis had been too quick, the British too slow."

**The Best Years of Their Lives: The National Service Experience 1945-1963.** By TREVOR ROYLE. Michael Joseph, £12.95.

Army haircuts, barrack-room squalor, and barrack-square "bull", evoked in reminiscent interviews, official records, and potted history. Old soldiers may feel that the National Servicemen whinge a good deal, until they recall that many fought and some died in post-War hostilities in Malaya and Korea.

**Bread and Wine. Fontamara.** By IGNAZIO SILONE. Dent, £4.95, £4.50.

Welcome new translations of two classic novels, both first published in German in Switzerland, where Silone had been forced into exile for his anti-Fascism, and both revised by him in the 1950s, some twenty years before he died.

**Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years 1903-1939.** By MARTIN STANNARD. Dent, £14.95.

Refreshingly plain title for a huge and judicious first volume, by a Lecturer in English at the University of Leicester, in what looks like becoming the standard life. Unlike many, Martin Stannard interweaves critical understanding with biographical insight: the best Waugh reporting yet.

*R.M.*

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# PRESS

# The Ethics of Fallible Journalism

## *By Herb Greer*

> *"When you have done a fault, be always pert and insolent, and behave your self as if you were the injured person. . . ."*
>
> **Jonathan Swift,** DIRECTIONS TO SERVANTS *(1745)*

IN THE LAST DECADE OR SO, poetic rough justice has caught up with journalists. After generations of shrugging and laughing off public outrage, ridicule, and contempt, they have begun to worry about their image. This funk manifests itself in a tendency to talk and write earnestly for the general public about the ethics of journalism, or the morality of a free press.[1]

The attachment of the adjective "journalistic" to ethics is often made to seem like the modification of the noun justice by the epithet "social": the conceit in practice warps or destroys the meaning of the modified word. Discussing how this happens with journalism, I have mentioned in an earlier article,[2] the assertion that journalism is not a profession but an "occupation". When journalists say this, it functions as a plea in mitigation of their ambiguous attitude toward ethical questions. It hints specifically that the ethical considerations binding on other persons and other professions do not apply to journalists as pillars of democracy and protagonists of our "free media".

And yet some serious journalists do seem to be concerned about ethics. Tom Goldstein was a reporter for *Associated Press*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Times*. He was later press secretary for the Mayor of New York, and now teaches journalism at the University of California's Berkeley campus. His book *The News At Any Cost* (1985) has this subtitle: *How Journalists Compromise Their Ethics to Shape the News*. Geoffrey Robertson is an English barrister who writes on legal affairs for *The Guardian*, and chaired an independent enquiry into Britain's Press Council. His book *People Against the Press* (1983) was a result of the enquiry. The index lists nine references to ethics, four of them extending over several pages. Goldstein's book indexes eighteen references to "codes of ethics", and four of these are also multi-page entries. The former *Sunday Times* journalist Philip Knightley's book, *The First Casualty* (1975), has no index reference to ethics or codes or the like, but the lack is not surprising—his book is a forthright account of how war correspondents have always committed various forms of mayhem on the truth. His concern with ethical questions is relatively narrow, concentrating mainly on the question of whether the journalist should ever lie when reporting a war. But it does cast an indirect light upon the wider values and standards of the journalistic profession.

One of the most significant episodes in *The First Casualty* stars a journalist of long-standing international reputation, Claud Cockburn. Together with a colleague, he fabricated a report of a Spanish Civil War battle that never took place. This was not done under deadline pressure but in cold blood, for ideological reasons. Guidebooks were used for topographical information, and details carefully selected to avoid detection by experts. Knightley quotes Cockburn's comment on this premeditated mendacity:

> "In the end it emerged as one of the most factual, inspiring, and at the same time sober pieces of war reporting I ever saw."[3]

Cockburn also contended that readers had no "right to know" the facts of this "shocking war". Knightley says that this attitude was invalid and rendered Cockburn unfit to report the war. He does not say that it rendered Cockburn unfit to be a journalist.

The books by Knightley and by Goldstein make it obvious that lying is anything but unusual in the practice of journalism; the bending of truth is more or less normal. This professional condition includes the "serious" end of the journalistic spectrum. The most fascinating aspect of the Cockburn episode is that after 30 years in which to reflect on what he had done, he was not apologetic; he was *proud* of having lied. The revelation did not affect his professional status in any way. After his open brag had been in print for a decade without retraction, he was accepted without objection for readmission to Britain's National Union of Journalists. I inquired about this at the union's London office, and was answered with the statement that there was no record of *any* journalist ever having been barred or expelled for lying in print—though one Right-wing reporter had been excluded for his racist attitude. Of course, a member might be disciplined, and even expelled, for some really serious offence like crossing a picket line.

When Janet Cooke was caught red-handed in her Pulitzer-Prize-winning fabrication in *The Washington Post*, its editor, Ben Bradlee, called her "a one-in-a-million liar". It is an ambiguous description, which betrays an ignorance of journalism, past and present, hardly believable in a man of

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[1] For an interesting if brief bibliography on media ethics, see *Sources in Media Ethics* by David A. Boileau in the September 1986 issue of *World Media Report*. His list does not include the books cited below.

[2] "Who Censors What, Where & When?", ENCOUNTER, July-August 1986.

[3] *The First Casualty* (1975), p. 196. The passage is a direct quote from Cockburn's autobiography *I, Claud*, published in 1967 by Penguin.



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Bradlee's experience and eminence. Did he mean that Cooke was "one-in-a-million" because her lie won a Pulitzer Prize before she was caught *in flagrante*; i.e. her *quality* as a liar was one in a million? When Michael Daly lied in his Ulster dispatches to the *New York Daily News* he won no prizes. Like Ms Cooke he left the job he had at that time, but there is no record of either reporter being "drummed out" of the journalistic profession. The *Columbia Law Review* (in a December 1976 article, "Defamation and Privacy under the First Amendment" by Alfred Hill) draws a conclusion which may explain this, reasoning that the American Constitution's First Amendment protects "some falsehood in order to protect speech that matters." The author doesn't suggest that such protection extends to the sort of lying practised by Daly and Cooke, but he does show that, even among jurists, lying in American journalism is not regarded as *contra bonos mores*.

In Britain the invention of "news"—like the famous interview with a Falklands war widow which appeared in *The Sun*—has been the occasion for protest and even outcry; but—unlike America—not for resignation, much less exclusion from the profession or its trade union.

After *The Last Round-Up?*, a Thames Television feature on Czech dissidents in the series *TV Eye*, was broadcast in June 1981, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission upheld three out of five complaints against the programme, finding that they constituted unfair or unjust treatment. In one case the statement had been made that a named member of *Charter 77* (a lawful organisation) was involved in attempts to set up a workers' movement (which is unlawful). In another it had been claimed that a list of names and addresses of contacts in Czechoslovakia (some of whom were subsequently arrested) had fallen into the hands of the Czech Secret Police. No such list existed, and the reporter, Julian Manyon, had been told quite categorically that it did not. He was not expelled from the National Union of Journalists for this lie; he was not even censured.

Although the NUJ code prohibits "suppression of truth" and distortion, this does not, on whatever rationalisation, bar admission to a self-confessed suppressor and distorter of the truth like Cockburn. This is not to say that the NUJ code of conduct has no force in the union. It has been used by union officials as an instrument of censorship against members.[4]

"Codes of conduct" for journalists are generally amusing documents. They consist of lists, sometimes the length of a heavy pamphlet, of solemn injunctions, encompassing such admirable objectives as respect for truth; fairness; the protection of sources; and accuracy. There is also "freedom", meaning freedom *for* journalists, not *from* them (this would be construed by most Western journalists as an attack on democracy). Libel and slander are to be avoided (might lead to prosecution); distortion is frowned on; so is encouragement of discrimination on grounds of "race, colour, creed, gender, or sexual orientation." (In Britain this last clause is used mostly by NUJ members who try to censor their colleagues, and to enforce positive discrimination in favour of ethnic minorities, especially Asians and West Indians, all non-Christians (except Jews), and women and homosexuals. Codes of conduct also forbid the acceptance of inducements "which might influence the performance of professional duties."

For most groups who are called professional—doctors and lawyers for example—codes of conduct are designed to protect the public from malpractice, and they offer sanctions against offenders. Journalistic codes are different. They are there to protect journalism against the public—in particular from embarrassing accusations that journalists "have no ethical standards". In most professions, codes of conduct are binding on practitioners. Journalists, on the other hand, are bound by their codes very loosely, if at all. There is little point in setting down here yet another anthology of anecdotes to illustrate the cavalier attitude of journalists towards their codes of practice, which the *Columbia Law Review* article characterised as a ". . . wilful and wanton disregard of that charity which would activate us in our social intercourse."[5]

This is cynically acknowledged by the journalistic profession, and by the general public and others who have suffered from this "disregard". For copious illustration of journalistic ramping and chicanery in Britain, the interested reader may turn to Robertson's book; or to Knightley's for the area of war reporting; or to Goldstein's for American malpractices. Goldstein confesses (one of the best points, made on page 12):

> "When I told journalist friends that I was writing a book about press ethics, the almost universal response was: 'Short book.' A few added: 'Press ethics? That's an oxymoron. . . .'"

The recent case of *General William Westmoreland versus CBS* in New York showed that television journalists are as good as any shifty newspaper hack at reducing a code of conduct to a dirty scrap of paper, and getting away with it. But if it is correct to say that journalists in the West often behave abominably, it is wrong to suggest that they have no ethical standards. Before saying what these really are, I want to look at the curiously equivocal pose of journalistic professionals like Goldstein, Knightley, and Robertson, who criticise their more rambunctious colleagues and talk either about "ethics" (in the case of Goldstein and Robertson) or "truth" (as Knightley does).

The subtitle of Goldstein's book is worth quoting again: *How Journalists Compromise Their Ethics To Shape The News*. Actually, the book's text does not show that journalists

[4] Bernard Levin has written on this subject in his London column. See "When a Palate Discriminates" and "Don't Let the Censors Call the Tune" (*The Times*, 13 July and 12 September 1985).

[5] An unusually censorious remark for that article. It also says: "The press is sometimes entitled to more protection under the first amendment than private persons would be for like communications, and never to less protection." I.e. journalists' rights supersede those of the individual—a sentiment that would not be out of place in the Soviet Union, or Unesco.

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have any ethics which could be called "theirs"; most of it suggests in the normal way that they do not have any at all. Goldstein himself appears to recommend "ethical rules". But they are those of Western society at large, in which lying and the abuse of privilege are disliked, condemned, and sometimes punished by legal sanctions when they are flaunted in public. And so with Robertson too, though as a British author he is dealing with a situation in which privilege is demanded by journalists as a matter of tradition rather than, as in America, bestowed by the Constitution. Citing a number of Royal Commissions on the press, he speaks of "the highest professional and commercial standards", which is not very helpful because (*1*) the two adjectives tend to contradict each other, and (*2*) there is no positive indication anywhere in *People Against the Press* of what these standards are, beyond general chatter about "fairness", "truth", etc.

Goldstein's treatment of "standards" is confused, to say the least. Discussing Rupert Murdoch, he says that many respectable journalists and editors are offended by the brazen and partial journalism of *The New York Post*, while pointing out that the same people are remarkably complaisant about flagrant partiality in, say, *The New York Times*. Goldstein sees this as hypocrisy (though I suspect it may also have something to do with the fact that Murdoch is not American-born, and not a political "liberal").

Goldstein adds that Murdoch has "openly flouted the present standards of American journalism." Now, on the evidence of Goldstein's own book, this is patent nonsense. Indeed, Murdoch seems to conform rather closely to the *de facto* standards of American (and in Britain, of British) journalism, and does so with greater flair and success than many of his detractors—who happen also to be competitors. He manages this with a cocky aggressiveness that has upset and embarrassed many American journalists and editors; and they dislike him for it (exactly as their counterparts and the unions do in the United Kingdom, for comparable reasons). It is always maddening to be badly beaten at one's own game.

Like Goldstein, Robertson refers to "ethics" in a vaguely reverent manner, but never comes close to any positive and clear statement of what the word connotes that is special to journalists. Some negative indications are given of what is meant by "ethics". In the way that an empty mould shows the shape of a piece of pottery, Robertson's huffy accounts of malpractice (like Knightley's condemnation of lying and

## *TV & the "Media Courtesans"*

I DON'T KNOW **what's happened to our standards. I fear that we in the mass media are creating such a market for mediocrity that we've diminished the incentive for excellence. We celebrate notoriety as though it were an achievement. Fame has come to mean being recognised by more people who don't know anything about you. In politics, we have encouraged the displacement of thoughtfulness by the artful cliché.**

**Which brings me to my own profession, indeed, my very own job and that of several of my distinguished colleagues here. Overestimated, overexposed, and, by reasonable comparison with any job outside sports and entertainment, overpaid. I am a Televison News Anchor—"role model" for Miss America contestants and tens of thousands of university students in seach of a degree without an education. How does one live up to the admiration of those who regard the absence of an opinion as objectivity or (even more staggering to the imagination) as courage?**

**How does one grapple with a state of national confusion that celebrates questions over answers? How does one explain or, perhaps more relevant, guard against the influence of an industry which is on the verge of becoming a hallucinogenic barrage of images, whose only grammar is pacing, whose principal theme is energy?**

WE ARE LOSING *our ability to manage ideas; to contemplate, to think. We are in a constant race to be first with the obvious. We are becoming a nation of electronic voyeurs whose capacity for dialogue is a fading memory, occasionally jolted into reflective life by a one-liner:*

**"New ideas."**
**"Where's the beef?"**
**"Today is the first day of the rest of your life."**
**"Window of vulnerability."**
**"Freeze now."**
**"Born again."**
**"Gag me with a spoon."**
**"Can we talk?"**

*No, but we can relate. Six-year-olds want to be stewardesses. Eight-year-olds want to be pilots. Nineteen-year-olds want to be anchor-persons. Grown-ups want to be left alone, to interact in solitary communion with the rest of our electronic global village.*

CONSIDER THIS PARADOX: **Almost everything that is publicly said these days is recorded. Almost nothing of what is said is worth remembering. And what *do* we remember? Thoughts that were expressed hundreds or even thousands of years ago by philosophers, thinkers, and prophets whose ideas and principles were so universal that they endured without videotape or film, without the illustrations or photographs or cartoons—in many instances even without paper, and for thousands of years without the easy duplication of the printing press.**

WHAT IS LARGELY MISSING *in American life today is a sense of context, of saying or doing anything that is intended or even expected to live beyond the moment. There is no culture in the world that is so obsessed as ours with immediacy. In our journalism, the trival displaces the momentous because we tend to measure the importance of events by how recently they happened. We have become so obsessed with facts that we have lost all touch with truth.*

AS BROADCAST JOURNALISTS, **it's easy to be seduced into believing that what we're doing is just fine; after all, we get money, fame, and to a certain degree even influence. But money, fame, and influence without responsibility are the assets of a courtesan. We must accept responsibility for what we do, and we must think occasionally of the future.**

***Ted Koppel***

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TED KOPPEL, *"anchor man" of the ABC news programmes, is one of the leading American "television personalities". He was awarded the "Broadcaster of the Year" award by the International Radio & Television Society, and these are his remarks made in New York on that occasion.*

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propaganda) give a certain negative content to "ethics". On close examination this turns out to be exactly what it is in Goldstein's book, and in every discussion of the matter that I have ever watched on television, heard on radio, or read in print: journalists and publishers ought not to exploit their "privilege of access to the public" by lying, cheating, partiality, or callous conduct toward the subjects of their work. But of course these are social precepts which apply to any public-service profession and to any members of society. There is nothing about them which is peculiar in any way to journalism.

If journalists were "just like anybody else", that would be the end of it. We could say, in the words of the *Columbia Law Review*, that they should be "activated" by the same charity in social intercourse that is expected of other people. In other words, they ought to behave with a modicum of common decency. Some of them do; many of them do not; and they are in this respect much of a muchness with the general run of humanity.

So far so good—but it so happens that journalists are not *supposed* to be just like everybody else. Pleading special responsibilities in the context of democracy, they claim special status, and with this status goes a demand for exemption from the general ethical constraints of society. In America this demand is given legal recognition; in Britain it has, for all the bad media behaviour, the force of much political approval. It is this demand which provides the basis for journalism's real framework of ethics, its ultimate operational code.

*The Shorter Oxford Dictionary* gives this definition of ethics: "Rules of conduct recognised in certain limited departments of human life." *N.B.*: Not exhorted or recommended, but *recognised*. Of course, this would exclude "codes of conduct", which are in the nature of exhortations, honoured as much (or more) in the breach than in the observance. But journalism *does* have a set of rules that are observed in practice, although so far as I know these have never been written out formally in any book or article, or anywhere else. So, as a public service, I will now set them down in the form of a rough but fairly comprehensive summary:

**Rule 1** (*sine qua non*). Attract the attention of the public. Without this attraction there can be no communication, and the profession of journalism cannot exist. Any reasonable means are permissible, and "reasonable" shall be defined by professional journalists (this includes editors and publishers) and *no one else*.

**Rule 2.** All coverage—politics, governmental affairs, private lives, military operations, commercial matters, and every other category without exception—may be obtained in a manner to be determined by the professional journalist and *no one else*. His criterion shall always be the public interest, which will include the interest (i.e. curiosity) of the public. In cases of dispute the public interest shall be defined by the professional journalist and *no one else*.

**Rule 3.** If the subject of coverage wishes to reply, his or her right of access through the media shall be determined by the professional journalist and *no one else*. Any outside attempt to interfere with this discretion shall be construed as an attack upon the freedom of the media and publicised as such.

**Rule 4.** There is no such thing as the abuse of press freedom. Any attempt to apply this term to the practice of journalism in any medium shall be construed as an attack on the freedom of the press and an insult to democracy, and publicised as such.

**Rule 5.** Terms of honesty, fairness, truth, morality, justice, and all other such value-judgments shall be determined by professional journalists and *no one else*, where they involve the practice of journalism. The criterion shall always be the public interest (see Rule 2).

**Rule 6.** Any attempt by any person or body, private or public (especially the government) to invoke any legal restraint upon the practice of journalism, whether it be through new or old laws of libel and slander, through censorship, official or unofficial, or appeals to discretion, decency, or other such arbitrary terms, shall be construed as an attack on the freedom of the press, an insult to democracy, and destruction of the people's right-to-know, and publicised as such. *N.B.*: Professional journalists may themselves have recourse to libel and slander actions at their discretion.

**Rule 7.** Freedom, democracy, and the people's right-to-know are synonymous with the unfettered practice of journalism. Any suggestion that this identity is anything other than absolute shall be construed as an attack upon the foundations of democracy, and publicised as such.

**Rule 8.** The professional journalist shall normally be responsible to *no one* but his colleagues as defined above (see Rule 1). In certain circumstances he shall be responsible to the law; these circumstances shall be determined by professional journalists and *no one else*. Any attempt to do so by anyone outside the profession of journalism shall be construed as an attempt to destroy democracy, and publicised as such.

**Rule 9.** The discretion of professional journalists in all matters covered by these rules of ethics is absolute. Any suggestion to the contrary shall be construed as an attack on freedom, democracy, and the people's right-to-know, and publicised as such.

Like all ethical systems this one presents a general set of human ideals which fortunately are not practised perfectly in the real world. Perfection is more nearly attained in the United States, where the Constitution almost places journalists above the law. Heavier legal restraints in Britain do not permit the near-perfection of the American ethical achievement; but journalists everywhere nevertheless work towards this as best they can.

To put the matter as succinctly as possible, journalists in the free world demand the right to write and to publish absolutely anything at all at their discretion, whatever the consequences, with total impunity. Like Jonathan Swift's servant, they meet any and all attacks on their arrogance and callousness with outraged accusations of anti-democratic sentiments and behaviour. They do the same in answer to

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demands that they should live up to the so-called "codes of conduct" or "codes of ethics" published variously by publications, media companies, or trade unions. In effect they aspire to some form of sovereign status, not unlike that of the medieval clergy, subject only to their own rules—the *real* rules as set out above. If anyone thinks I am exaggerating or being totally satirical, let me quote from the 1954 declaration of the International Federation of Journalists, which is even today printed on the IFJ press card. Section 8 of this declaration is unusually (if not completely) frank:

> "Within the general law of each country the journalist recognises, in professional matters, the jurisdiction of his colleagues only; he excludes every kind of interference by governments and others."

This would be unexceptionable if the "professional matters" of journalism were as compartmented as those of doctors, lawyers, or other professions; and if the rest of the rules in the declaration (which resemble the usual "codes of conduct") were really *binding* on journalists. But they are not; and the "professional matters" of journalism are intermingled with the rest of society and its problems in ways that those of other professions are not. This does not prevent journalists from pursuing their own interests in ways that clash with those of society at large; with the honest function of elected governments; and, destructively, with the interests of other professions or groups. This would be true even if journalists were a genuine clerisy and/or the source of all useful democratic information. Since they are manifestly neither of these things, their demand for absolute discretion, and for immunity to the constraints which bind the rest of society, is no more acceptable than it would be from any other pressure group in pursuit of its own interests.

The tension between journalistic arrogance and the sound governance of a free society furnishes much of the irritation which is endemic in the practice of Western journalism. One example of this occurred in Britain, when the BBC's *Panorama* libelled two Tory MPs, implicitly and falsely accusing them of being fascists and racists. In the USA most of all, where the hubris of journalists is royal, not to say imperial, there appears to be a media version of that "conspiracy" described by Adam Smith in which merchants conspire against the public to raise prices. In selling news, journalists are more often than not conspiring to raise excitement, with a marked indifference to the full possible range of social consequences. But the public is not stupid. Readers and listeners can see quite clearly how this cantrip operates, and develop their own form of resistance to it, though they remain vulnerable in certain ways. The danger to media freedom and elective democracy which is created in this way may abate when, and if, more journalists become less pharisaical about the rules they actually do live by, while showing some practical respect for those they offer on paper —and usually leave there.

## The Well-Beloved

To wake up and discover—
a splarge of chill water—
that she was but a forthright woman
on whom we had bestowed
(because of the crook of an elbow,
the swing of a breast or hip,
a glance, half understood)
goddess or angelhood?

Raised by the fury of our need,
supplicating, lusting, grovelling
before the tall tree of Artemis,
the transfiguring bow of Diana,
the rooting vulva of Circe, or
the slim shape of a nymph,
luring, dancing, beckoning:
all her wild disguises!

And now she does not shine,
or ride, like the full moon,
gleam or glisten like cascades
of uncatchable, blinding water;
disturb, like the owl's cry
by night, predatory, hovering;
marshlight, moonstone, or devil's daughter.
But conducts herself like any

Normal citizen, orderly or slattern,
giving us a piece of her mind,
pacifying or scolding children,
or, more determinedly, driving
or riding to her office, after
depositing the children in a créche,
while she fulfils herself,
competing with the best.

Of course, she is probably saying
the same thing of us, as Oisin,
our tall hero from Fairyland,
descends or falls from the saddle
to dwindle into an irritable husband,
worn down by the quotidian,
unwilling to transform the night
with love's necessary shafts of light.

Except that when the old desires stir
—fish under weed-tangled waters—
will she remember that we once were
the strange ones who understood
the powers that coursed so furiously
through her witch blood, prepared
to stand, bareheaded, open handed,
to recognise, worship and obey:

To defy custom, redeem the ordinary,
with trembling heart, and obeisant knee
to kneel, prostrate ourselves again,
if necessary, before the lady?

*John Montague*

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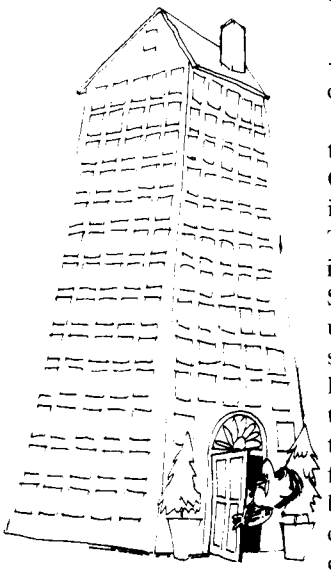
# ARCHITECTURE

## Of Styles, Houses, & Trees

### *Post-Modern or Pre-Modern—By Wayland Kennet*



NOT FOR A century-and-a-half has the air been rent by such loud cries of architectural battle.

Then it was the Battle of the Styles, "Classical against Gothic", a battle celebrated in the school-books ever since. The present battle calls a style in question, the "Modern Style", but that style is not under attack from another style: neither from one which looks back to what existed in the remote past (as a resurrected Pugin might expect); nor from one which looks forward beyond it, proclaiming that it could make even better use of modern materials than the Modern Style itself (as a resurrected Gropius might expect).

"Post-Modernism" does not constitute a rival style, or not yet. It does indeed look back to what happened before the Modern Style—not to a remote and idealised past, but to what happened just before it. In the hands of its best practitioners it can be delightful, and it is certainly practical and popular. But its very name, which makes a statement only about chronological succession, and only by reference to another chronological statement, expresses correctly, at least for the moment, its reactive nature. Pugin would not recognise a style there. (I shall return to it later, in friendlier vein.)

On the other side, the Modern Style was under attack twenty years ago from the idea of the plug-in and throw-away city, where modules could be crane-lifted on to giant skeletons and off again at will, according to changing needs. Nothing was to last more than twenty years, if that. Its proponents did indeed look forward beyond "modern", and claim to make more rational use of contemporary materials than that style, with its heavy permanent structures, could do. It gave great intellectual pleasure to those who read its dashing plans and proposals. But it did not, and cannot, constitute an operative rival style, for two reasons: first, because people did not (and do not) want to live that way; and second, which would be conclusive anyhow, because a plug-in and throw-away infrastructure to meet the changing needs of the superstructures has never been costed, and is almost certainly impossible.

The Modern Style is not under attack from any style at all, but from a public demand, easily translated into public and private policy. It is this. Do not build where you can conserve or restore, and where you must build, give absolute precedence to fitting in with the surroundings. Build only where there is nothing that can be adapted to the use you have in mind; and build as much like a familiar sort of building as you can. Developers and elected deciders now know they must do this if the people are to love them, and that to do otherwise runs a real risk of making the people hate them. The Modern Style is rejected, and no other style is clearly adopted instead. The present battle is thus between two policies, not two styles.

This battle of policies requires thought. We have been so busy fighting it that we have had little time to ask what it is and what its occurrence can teach us about ourselves as we are now, late 20th-century dwellers in homes, workers in offices, factories, and farm-buildings, users of public libraries and airports, worshippers in churches, and so on.

Styles come and go all the time, and are usually succeeded by other styles, which are greeted at the time with joy or rage according to taste and education, but are identifiable, both then and to later generations. Norman begat Early English; E.E. begat Dec., Dec. begat Perp., Perp. begat Strapwork and you could write the corresponding genealogy for any other architectural culture. And thus it was, down to the beginning of this century when Victorian Gothic begat Edwardian Variegated and Edwardian Variegated suddenly begat Modern, which lasted quite a long time and did not beget anything at all. It has simply fallen into disfavour and many in the present generation, lacking a good new idea, have simply turned back to *pre*-modern and called it *post*-modern. It isn't *post-modern* at all; what could that mean anyhow? It is post-Edwardian variegated, as if there had never been a Modern Style.

What has happened seems like the one thing that never happens: the end of history. But perhaps we are seeing the end of a very old process, and one which is so familiar to us that we are slow to notice the possibility that it may no longer be there: the competitive rise and graceful fall of modes of architecture. It seems quite simply to have stopped, at least for the moment.



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Now if this is so, even if it is only so for the moment, explanation or at least comment is in order. Let us start with materials.

The Modern Style said: "Look, steel and concrete and glass will do this and this, neither of which we have ever been able to do before. We are no longer bound by the limits of the pulling, squeezing, twisting and bending that wood or stone or brick will put up with. We can forget all that and do new things. Look what we can do. . . !"

And lo and behold, the Style did indeed do something new. It spanned enormous distances, reached dizzy heights, thrust out cantilevers of geological size. Steel spurned the fine blade and stood forth like a muscle-bound oaf in record rectangles. Concrete burst out of the modest task the Romans had assigned it, that of holding handsome stone surfaces together, and assumed shapes dictated not by beauty but by the convenience and speed with which it could be poured into them. Glass outgrew the secrecy of our looking out from inside, the jewelled mystery of our being lit from outside, the comfortable duty of theophany in the monstrance—and became one more substance of which large plates could be obtained. Good; we no longer had any need of columns, arches, vaults, blocks, courses, ashlar, arris, respond, or pane. In exchange we were able to build in bigger slabs and chunks.

The economics of Modernism were indeed attractive, and the bigger you built the more attractive they got. The "cheapness" appeal coincided in Britain with another; the appeal of finding a way to stop taking good farmland and ruining the countryside by allowing a limitless spread of two- and three-storey buildings. It has never been as well known to the British as it should be that England-and-Wales is (except for city states, like Singapore) the most densely populated country in the world. If you add great empty Scotland, then even Britain-as-a-whole drops only to third place, after Belgium and the Netherlands. Therefore, when Modernism in the 1930s said: "Look—new materials allow us to build tall blocks quite cheaply, and if we go up, we won't have to go out", governmental and entrepreneurial ears were pricked up from Aberdeen to Plymouth. And in the 1950s governments put a subsidy on all high-rise local-authority housing, increasing floor by floor after the third floor, in order to encourage builders to go upwards and to stop the urban sprawl.

TWO THINGS HAPPENED. The first was that many people did not much like living in tower blocks, or indeed in lower slab-flats, come to that. And the affinity of system-building with towers and slabs, together with the pressing overall housing demand, meant that families began to be shovelled into flats instead of living in the little houses they were used to. They got miserable, and more of them vandalised their environment—and robbed and mugged each other, and mistreated their children—than when they had lived in houses and terraces.

Naturally the effect was not equal on all sorts of people. The better-off, living in the better tower blocks and able to move in and out of them at different times of life (especially so as to avoid bringing up young children there) have been and are happy when they choose to live that way. The poor, living in the shoddier tower blocks and confined there for a life-time—and being in the nature of things closer to the threshold of human endurance and thus of breakdown and disorder—have suffered more than they did in terrace houses of comparable slumminess, and more than the better-off do in better dwellings of comparable towerishness.

The effect is not confined to Britain. Around Paris they are dynamiting the towers just as we are. It might have been foreseen. It should have been foreseeable. Nowhere to leave the baby outside but in earshot; nowhere to hang out the washing; lifts which like all lifts break down, leaving old people to walk up ten or fifteen stories with the shopping. Alice Coleman puts it with force:

> "Throughout most of human history our inbuilt guidance system has led us to produce a shelter with an adjoining piece of territory, and to impress it with distinctive marks of identity."[1]

The particular disorientation caused by high blocks is superimposed on that caused to people who (in any circumstances) are moved, as opposed to moving themselves. It is now well-known that those who are (to use a now obsolete state-planning word) "decanted" suffer a feeling of loss as if someone dear to them had died. They grieve. The bewilderment, nausea, even outrage which people in tower blocks feel can also be like a milder version of space-sickness. Lack of contact with the earth is a halfway house to weightlessness. If we try the simple experiment of saying *garden, courtyard, backyard, terrace*, even *basement area*, the mere running over of the words and their associations in our minds must make us wonder that our grandfathers did not realise that these were things people could not humanly be deprived of.

The second thing that happened was the discovery that we were not, after all, saving land by building high.

A given number of people needed the same number of schools, squares, parks, car-parking spaces and so on, whether they were stacked three deep or fifteen deep; and this inelasticity overrode the effect of any new elasticity on the land take. After a while we understood that the smaller the ground area for a given number of people indoors, the larger the corresponding outdoors got to look, and the more violent and forlorn the winds that raged there. The word *point* was born, as in point-block or Ronan Point. These were identifiable points in a desert of dependent space—identifiable, but often hardly distinguishable.

I WAS ABLE, in the late 1960s, to observe and take a small part in the reversal of the trend towards high-rise housing. It then normally used "system construction": that is, a large proportion of standardised and prefabricated units. From the Ronan Point disaster onwards through failure after failure of large buildings, especially in the public sector, "system-

[1] Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial* (London, 1985), p. 18.

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building" as a whole acquired an ill repute which perhaps really belonged to its failures. But those failures were so numerous and conspicuous that they were bound to invalidate the whole idea.

When I became a junior minister in the old Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1966, Richard Crossman (who was then the Minister) was just about to abolish the government subsidy on all floors above the third, which had been introduced by the Conservative governments of the 1950s. This was the beginning of the turn away from high-rise housing at governmental level.

With the arrow of public taste and understanding pointing back to low (or lowish) housing, one very large advantage of Modernism began to disappear: economies of scale through the use of concrete and other "modern" materials. Of course it is possible to use concrete, prefabricated composition blocks and all the rest for human-scale buildings as well as giant ones; and it is cheaper than brick or stone, but the price difference is less. In fact there are now well-qualified people, especially the classicist architect Quinlan Terry, who vigorously draw the distinction between the costs of building and of maintenance to the disadvantage of Modernism. Traditional materials (typically: stone, clay bricks, and wood) cost more to buy than modernist materials (typically pre-cast concrete, sand-lime bricks, and laminated plastic). But, mainly because of their lower coefficients of expansion, which allow smaller expansion joints, they are not only safer but also easier, and thus cheaper, to maintain.[2] As these things sink into public consciousness, another practical economic reason for the decline of modernism will become apparent.

IN LATE 1967 it occurred to me to wonder what the relationship might be, on what was inelegantly called "a discounted cash-flow basis", between the cost of restoring an old house so as to get 30 or 40 years more use out of it, and demolishing it and replacing it with another one good for 30 or 40 years without major restoration. This was during the heroic age of urban clearance and redevelopment. In large cities, especially Manchester and Birmingham, the local authorities were, I believe, actually felling serviceable housing by the mass method used by armies when they want to destroy a town without shelling it; that is, with a chain or strong wire spread between two tanks or powerful tractors, which then proceed down parallel streets.

Whatever the method of demolition, nobody knew the answer to my question because, broadly speaking, nobody had asked it. So at New Hall, Cambridge, I gathered a conference of local-authority housing officers, builders, academics and officials; and we thrashed out the methods by which we might find out that answer. When the work was done and results began to come in, they naturally showed that much depended on the values assigned to this or that factor in the various equations which were likely to prove useful. But the general drift was clear (and it has since then been further clarified). A building for a given use, and especially housing, has to be of really rotten design, or in a really terrible condition, for it to make economic sense to demolish and replace it rather than restore, modernise, and improve it. With that in hand, I went on to devise the "General Improvement Area" and to seek and obtain from Parliament its enactment. It still exists, alongside other statutory and economic devices which make it possible for local government in partnership with private enterprise to keep and improve, as thrifty individuals do, rather than perpetually discard and replace, as do spendthrifts.

These were new economic insights. But there was already a growing body of insights into the social effects of design and architecture: into the peace-keeping effect of good sight-lines from people's windows so that they can keep an eye on the street; the calming effect of clear individual territory for each family; and the propensity of sudden and artificial change to increase crime, misery, and squalor. At the time the American writer Jane Jacobs was the pioneer; since then Oscar Newman[3] and our own Alice Coleman have deepened and broadened the insights. Economics and sociology both were pointing away from the wilful and heroic, the general and gigantic, and towards the gradual, natural, recognisable, and small.

WHAT, THEN, OF THE SCHOOL of purely architectural criticism which may conveniently be called "Carlism" (from Charles, Prince of Wales)? That is: the heartfelt demand which is now increasingly made for arches and curves and pitched roofs, in other words for "architecture" as opposed to the "engineering" which so affronts us by its incongruity in our towns; of neighbourly architecture as opposed to all the boorish and élitist violence of "Sod you!", which was the slogan of a recent President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. After all, it is quite possible to build small-and-modest, with individual entrances and good sight-lines, using concrete and steel and glass. Examples are increasing; and that should make us wonder whether there is not yet another factor in our present revulsion against Modernism, something older than technical, economic, or sociological insight or fashion.

In most parts of the world when we began to make our own dwellings, as opposed to using caves, our raw material was the tree. We tore or cut off branches or fronds and stacked them against rocks or against each other; and they kept the rain off, after a fashion. We found that we no longer needed to go home to the cave every night to get warm and dry, and that we could hunt or pasture or till or explore further afield, and for more of the year. Those who did this got richer, and social selection presumably came into play.

In the course of all this we became grateful to trees. We looked at the way they branch and spring and leaf with the eye of a better-filled belly, in fact with economic satisfaction, which may be one root of all aesthetic pleasure. We have forgotten it now, but most beautiful sights and sensations, and most of the actions we now call "sport", were once

[2] See Frank Russell, ed., *Quinlan Terry* (Academy Editions, 1981), p. xiv.

[3] See, for instance his *Community of Interest* (1981) and *Defensible Space* (1976).

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economic necessities or at least advantages. Think of the meadow and the fruit and the wild animal, the snowfield that feeds the river that waters our cornfield. Think of running, riding, swimming, fishing, hunting, shooting, sailing, camping. Perhaps this general aetiology of beauty is as likely as the obvious particular derivation of the most beautiful sensation of all from the continuation of the race itself.

The shape of trees and the way we had to build in order to make shelters or temples out of them became part of our deepest sense of survival and of improvement. So the interlocking branches became the timber roof, and the trunk became the column; the ribbed bark became the Corinthian column, and the horizontal timber the beam and the architrave. Then in the Egyptian and Greek world the glorious translation was made from wood to stone. But the triglyphs and metopes and dentils remind us still of carpenters, as the earlier carpentry reminded us of the wild wood itself. And when, after Greece, stone and brick began to do things which were not derived from the original translation from wood, we still turned to trees for the general idea; after all, they had been defeating gravity for longer than we had. The Gothic arch is still the interlocking branches; the cathedral wall with its colonnade, its clerestory, and its triforium is still a line of branching trunks; the ribbed vault is still a pleached avenue in summer; and the foliate capitals pun between palms and garlands.

Thus it was at all scales—down through moderate-sized building to the simplest house, where the shape and proportion of walls and roofs could only look good to us if they bore some relation to the way timber may be set up and reached and adjusted. And thus it has been down through time as well, as we now begin to see.

MODERNISM DID US some obscure violence. We brought the tree with us from our first beginnings as humans, and to it we have slowly added other materials which are willing to arrange themselves comfortably in ways that remind us of the tree: principally stone and brick (though, in the Victorian age, cast iron was used splendidly—and too briefly—to fit into the tradition). Concrete and steel do not lend themselves to our dendrophily, and there lies the violence. How can we forget our loyalty to our first protector?

ALL THIS HAS in the last few years begun to affect what new buildings look like. But long before that, it affected what we thought about our old buildings. Christopher Wren did not take very much trouble to salvage remaining parts of the medieval churches he had to rebuild after the Great Fire: he generally pulled them down to get the best site he could. James Wyatt took no trouble to respect the forms of Windsor Castle, and actually demolished a sizeable part of Durham Cathedral. The Pugin generation (and the next) gothicised classical buildings as cheerfully as Inigo Jones had classicised old St Paul's. But in the early and mid-19th century, with Prosper Mérimée and William Morris, the movement to keep what was best among older buildings exactly as they were began to make headway.

What has happened now is that we want to keep not only the *best* of our older buildings as they are, but virtually *all* of them, unless they are manifestly incapable of repair. I have noticed even in the last year or two my own increasing respect for run-of-the-mill old buildings. By-law housing (so-called because at the beginning of the century local authorities set their own housing standards), which I used to think offensively drab, now looks surprisingly good and is quite convenient when it is well cared for. Most people now dislike seeing Victorian factories and warehouses demolished and will go to quite forlorn lengths to find uses for them.

Some wonder at this new view. One may read any day the denunciations by older Modernist architects of a planning system which protects buildings older than them, and their denunciations of all those sorts of people who have failed to tell them *why* they do not like the Modern Style, and their passionate insistence on their own right to continue building in the way they think good. But the reason people want in general to keep old buildings is because they do not like the alternative; and that is something new. They did like Wren; they did like Pugin; those architects still followed the tree. Our present discontent surely has something to do with the way we were deprived a few decades ago of the tree-based forms which have become as much our natural home as the snail's shell is his, and something to do with our preference for a house of our own, or even a flat in a tall house, rather than a flat in a box or tower.

In any case, the new public demand is there, and is already translated into public policy. Our planning system and our housing laws and our architecture schools are learning to live with it; and they are slowly learning to devote the freedom conferred on them by modern materials and modern cost-benefit analysis to providing new buildings which people can like as much as they like old ones.

THE BEST OF THE "Post-Modern" architects are already doing this with confidence and skill. Perhaps it is too early to decide that Post-Modernism is simply a chronological solecism for Pre-Modernism, and is not a style at all. It is certainly too early to decide it will never be a style. We should remember it was not till half-a-century after it was over that ordinary educated people could see more in Victorian Gothic than a generally arid reproduction of "the real thing". Now we can see that it included forceful, even titanic, innovations, and we must admit that Post-Modernism may come to do the same. It does not seem to have done so yet; but it may.

In the meantime, what about a new name? "Carlism", because of its historical associations both Scottish and Spanish, sounds too reactionary. "Dendrism" would be too obscure.. "Traditionalism"? But the thing may turn out not to be traditional at all. Though born of an archaising impulse it may, as Victorian Gothic did, slowly become the vehicle of new material skills, new strength, and new beauty. If it does, then that will be the time to name it.

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# ANTHROPOLOGY

# The Rise of the Anthropologue

## *White Science, Black Humour*—By ROGER SANDALL

*"We found many of the natives dressed in a thin French gauze, which they called 'byqui'; this being a light airy dress, and well calculated to display the shape of their persons. The manners of these females, however, . . . were rude and troublesome in the highest degree . . . being so vehement in their solicitations that I found it impossible to resist them. They tore my cloak, cut the buttons from my boy's clothes, and were proceeding to other outrages, when I mounted my horse and rode off, followed for half a mile by a body of these harpies. . . ."*

**Mungo Park,** TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AFRICA *(1799)*

MUNGO PARK was lucky to have that horse for his getaway. Even 200 years later a horse might still be useful, for as Nigel Barley relates, a modern traveller in West Africa may have to deal with women no less vehement in their solicitations—and certainly no less rude—who "walk straight up to the intended male and simply grasp him between the legs in a vice-like grip." Barley explains that an exhausted visitor might find some respite from their attentions in the shelter of a hotel; yet even there he found himself pursued by "an extremely large Fulani woman in her mid-fifties", bearing a distinct resemblance to Oliver Hardy, who pushed her way into his room and promptly began to unrobe. Very soon, he says, he found himself "trapped in a farce".

Like a lot of the entertaining anecdotes in *The Innocent Anthropologist* and *A Plague of Caterpillars*, Dr Barley's two books about anthropological fieldwork in Cameroon,[1] this is obviously in questionable taste. And how grateful we must be for that, since with the exception of a mere handful of writings (the late Shiva Naipaul's *North of South* comes notably to mind) reports on African life today have been unusually mealy-mouthed; as for observations by social scientists, these have tended to read as if the United Nations General Assembly were peering over the author's shoulder as he wrote. One never gets that sinister feeling with Barley's work, which combines the candour and colour of the early traveller's tales with a sharp wit and a laughing sense of the absurd.

This is just as well, for being "trapped in a farce" is the lot of every fieldworker. Misunderstandings never cease, and from the moment one muddily sets foot in a place like Cameroon, life is a comedy of errors. The times of appointments are wrong, not by hours, but by days: the ceremony has finished before one arrives. Recovering from setbacks like this, the anthropologist sits down to enquire into Cameroonian cosmology; but, tripped by a faulty noun, utters only farragos or obscenities. Inevitably, word of his doings spreads. His more hilarious ineptitudes are related far and wide. He enters into lore: then into legend. The plain fact of the matter is that anthropologists provide so much innocent amusement that it is hard to believe the longueurs of primitive life were ever endurable without them. Sentimentalists sometimes tell of seeing tears in the eyes of their informants when, at long last, the farce concludes and the fieldworker packs to go home. But we all know why. Nothing can replace the fun an anthropologist provides.

YET ANTHROPOLOGISTS are not supposed to laugh back, even though primitive life abounds in material for guffaws. Doubtless it was Dr Barley's violation of this rule of decorum, and the audible laughter echoing through his first book, which led *The Guardian* to describe it as "unconventional"; while *The Times Literary Supplement*, going further, felt obliged to comment on its "irreverent detail on African bureaucratic and anthropological customs." Now, without wanting to make too much out of a casual expression, surely the word *irreverent* is a very odd one. Can the reviewer have actually believed that the normal attitude, and perhaps even the appropriate attitude toward "African bureaucratic and anthropological customs", was one of reverence? Hardly. Yet it was a sound instinct which led the writer to this term, for as Barley himself said recently, "the subject of anthropology today is afflicted with a dreadful piety."

The dreadfulness of this piety is a fairly recent development. It is mainly due to a notable change in the character and motives of those who are drawn to the subject of anthro-

[1] *The Innocent Anthropologist*. By NIGEL BARLEY. Penguin Travel Library, £2.95. *A Plague of Caterpillars: A Return to the African Bush*. By NIGEL BARLEY. Viking, £9.95. Published in the US as *Ceremony: Adventures in a Mud Hut*. Henry Holt, $14.95.



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pology—a change which has seen the familiar figure of "the Anthropologist" being displaced by what, for want of a better term, we may call "the *Anthropologue*". At his best the anthropologist was disinterested. By contrast, when the *anthropologue* studies primitive life he always has an ulterior motive—often, if not invariably, of a salvationist kind. One consequence has been that the status of anthropology as a science is even shakier than it was, since science is of little or no interest to such people. Instead, they vainly rummage about in the great ragbag of primitive cultures, seeking means of personal redemption or models for their political or ideological hopes.

Such high ambitions are not to be taken lightly. And this is the main reason why, like that prototypical *anthropologue*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, they are driven by a deep emotional necessity to dignify and ennoble everything in the pre-industrial world. The laughable must be made grave; the repellent must be made somehow endearing; and the downright revolting must be swathed in a language so latinate and extraordinary that it is often hard to know exactly what is going on. Words like *sacred*, *sacral*, and *ritualistic* may be called on to produce a vaguely sanctifying effect; and if this is successful, then plain speaking about African tribal life will always seem tasteless, and usually irreverent as well.

PLAIN SPEAKING, of course, is the very last thing your true *anthropologue* wants—as a glance at Basil Davidson's *The Africans* (1969) shows. When Mr Davidson wrote this, it was of course as an enthusiastic auxiliary rather than as a ranking member of the anthropological corps. But his chapter on kings and kingdoms in Africa could hardly be improved upon as an example of the language of anthropologuery and how it works. The challenge, mind you, is considerable: his topic includes that place of legendary horrors, 19th-century Benin. But he takes it all in his stride. Speaking respectfully of "the royal party" and the "atmosphere of majesty at court" the author glances, more in sorrow than in anger, at a priesthood whose sacrificial excesses may simply have resulted from a fit of theocratic zeal; and he even manages to suggest that the carnage found by the British force of 1897 was largely, if not wholly, of their own making.

A quotation referring to kingship among the Nigerian Jukun extols "the indefinable spiritual potency which is the quintessence of kingship . . . immortal and indivisible"; while Davidson's own prose, swelling in honour of his royal theme, proclaims that the Ashanti king was "the manifest apex and prime representative" of his people, whose task was to "procure unbroken the moral order" of the state. The moral order of the Tutsi state was symbolised by a "ritual drum", and the cumulative adjectival effect Basil Davidson achieves is so majestical and impressive that we can only regard it as a gross tactical error when the author admits that the "ritual drum" is festooned with severed testicles, donated (presumably under duress) by defeated enemies of the king.

It is a thousand pities that Nigel Barley wasn't around in 1897 to give us *his* impression of life at the court of Benin. Any man who can title one of his chapters "*Ex Africa Semper Quid Nasty*" would surely have revelled in the pits full of sacrificial victims and the altars running with gore. Still, I suppose we should be grateful that we have him at all, however belatedly, because his humorous attempts to throw light on current anthropological superstitions would be welcome at any time.

He observes that it is one of the more dearly held beliefs of a certain kind of fieldworker that one only gets to know one's people, and wins their acceptance, by labouring in a comradely way side by side while tilling the soil. But in *The Innocent Anthropologist* we find that the Dowayo of North Cameroon regard this insistent egalitarianism as pure affectation. As soon as they set eyes on Barley they know at once that this visiting Englishman is made for higher things than hewing wood or drawing water; when he tried to do so, he writes, "frail old ladies insisted on carrying the water jar for me."

IN HIS LATEST BOOK, *A Plague of Caterpillars*, he again pokes fun at exhibitionistic "solidarity with the workers", but this time it takes on a deeper seriousness with the appearance of Bob, the "Black White Man". (The designation "Black White Man" is Cameroonian for a black man who is Westernised and behaves like a white man.) In the absurdity of his career and his expectations, Bob's story has in it much of the pathos surrounding the sort of people drawn to anthropology in the era of the *anthropologues*. When Barley picks him up by the roadside and gives him a lift into town, the Black White Man, an American Negro, describes himself as an anthropologist.

It turns out that Bob's is the sort of anthropology offered in a Black Studies course at an American East Coast college, a course which led him to believe that "it was vital for coloured Americans to have an alternative cultural tradition that would assign them a higher place than did the white one." He never celebrated Christmas, but observed an obscure festival of Swahili origin, and was mortified to discover that Africans had never heard of it. He had learned Swahili in the USA, and imposed it on his wife and children for one day a week in the house:

> "Having never been informed otherwise and having assumed that Africa was in some sense a unity, he had been genuinely astonished that no one in Cameroon could speak it or had even heard of the language."

Arrived in Africa, he installed his wife and three children in a waterless hut in an unsalubrious section of the town, "in order to share the rich and colourful life of the local people and 'find his roots'." Result: appalled by everything, and being sensible people never exposed to anthropology, his wife and children ran off home to the USA as fast as they could.

Bob so accurately depicts the confused alienation of many recruits to anthropology today that he seems almost too good to be true. Can we really believe in this incarnation of Soul Brotherhood whose determination not to impose on his African fellows the indignity of menial tasks "led him to refuse all offers from washermen, gardeners, house-repairers,

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drivers and the like", thus directly violating the African rule that it is the duty of the rich to supply employment for the poor, and destroying all attempts to know the people?

Is Bob a fact or an artefact? The bit about being black is intriguing. But perhaps it is only a story-teller's disguise, for the emotional and ethical make-up of the Black White Man is so eerily like that of certain White Black Men I have met that for all I know he's just an ingenious invention. And if that is the case, shouldn't a charge of wantonly fictionalising his material be indignantly brought against Barley by his peers?

FAT CHANCE! Both Dr Barley and his Black White Man are on safe ground. And this is because so many practitioners of anthropology *à la mode* regard distinctions between fact and fiction as both positivistic and *passé*—and, more seriously, in very bad taste. For many years now they have thought and argued that, given the subjectivity of observers and the bias of observation, it would be the most painful of solecisms high-handedly to call for a distinction between facts and fiction in the name of anthropological "science". All one can hope to do—all one *should* hope to do—is to interpret the infinitely varied frames of social action; to decode the infinite codes of meaning which social life presents, codes layered as richly as a semantic sedimentary deposit fully 100 feet thick. They would gladly use almost any other word than *science* to describe this game of cultural crytography—if only one existed of equal prestige.

"Interpretive explanation", wrote Clifford Geertz in 1980, "*is a form of explanation*, not just exalted glossography" (my emphasis). But there was a defensiveness in his phrasing all the same. Does it explain? And what does it explain? Could hermeneutics ("the science of interpretation, traditionally applied to the discovery of the real but hidden meanings of sacred texts") ever even *try* to explain the principal dynamic forces of social life?

Stimulating this interpretive push was the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, work which increasingly authorised a form of ratiocinative aestheticism as the proper way of understanding the primitive world. All things cultural were best seen as shaped into symmetries and patterns—if only, that is, enough ethnographic odds-and-ends were assembled, and if enough inspired ingenuity were applied to their arrangement. Just how far the Paris master himself was prepared to go in his explanatory claims for aestheticism can be found in *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology* (1964, tr. 1970), which he hoped would be listened to as a sort of "musical work, as the plan and chapter headings try to suggest." In what he calls the "Overture" to its "confused and indigestible pages" (and this characterisation is his own) Lévi-Strauss asserts that:

> "music itself is the supreme mystery of the science of man, a mystery that all the various disciplines come up against and which holds the key to their progress. . . ."

This enterprise simultaneously posed as a form of scientific enquiry, and prudently disclaimed any such status. Of the discussion of mythology to be found in *The Raw and the Cooked*, its author announced that "this book on myth is itself a kind of myth." But within metamythology what did it matter if reality was this way or that way? Whether it was the object or its mirror image, or any one of an infinite recession of subjectivities which had become the locus of enquiry? The important thing was not to notice what the recessive series was actually receding from.[2]

WHEN A NARRATIVE STUDY of myths, and the myths themselves, were defined as pretty much the same thing (*explanans* and *explanandum* democratically shaking hands), this kind of anthropology could all too easily be regarded as little more than "the telling of tales about the tales other people tell." There could not, according to the rules of this game, be such a thing as a *false* tale; nor was it easy to see how research which *succeeded* could be distinguished from research which had *failed*. Success would apparently be measured by the persuasiveness of the narrative, or the spellbinding nature of the tale.

Once this was accepted, anthropology *à la mode* became an intellectual disaster zone, waiting for Carlos Castaneda to happen. And pat he came, like the catastrophe in the old comedy, a real live sorcerer's apprentice carrying under his arm a book he had written. The book's title was *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (1968), and the title was itself significant, for it popularised the mere apprehension of the occult as "knowledge". This usage, along with talk about there being a "way" toward it, was the traditional usage of mysticism; in future, the language of mysticism would often be anthropology's language too. References to the *knowledge* of witches and sorcerers, meaning simply the baseless and unverified *beliefs* of witches and sorcerers, became commonplace in student essays—and not only there.[3]

AFTER CASTANEDA'S global sales passed into the millions his muse appears to have fallen silent. But he had made his point, and had won disciples: the recent book *Shabono: A Visit to a Remote and Magical World in the Heart of the South American Jungle* (1982), written by yet another sometime California student of anthropology and bearing encomia on its cover from Castaneda himself, shows that the strain of writing he pioneered is still alive and well. *Shabono*, however, seems to have been received rather more sceptically than its predecessors. A reviewer in *The American Anthropologist* discovered that this supposedly new work was largely made up of material pilfered from the earlier *Yanoamo: The Narrative of a White Girl Kidnapped by Amazonian Indians* (1971).

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[2] Note the frequency of recursive or recessive formations in Clifford Geertz's useful survey, "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought", *American Scholar* (No. 49, 1980), pp. 165-179: "so many signs signing signs. . . what we assert in asserting. . . how we think about how we think. . . ."

[3] See Kenneth Minogue, "The Guru: Thoughts after Reading Carlos Castaneda" (ENCOUNTER, August 1976).

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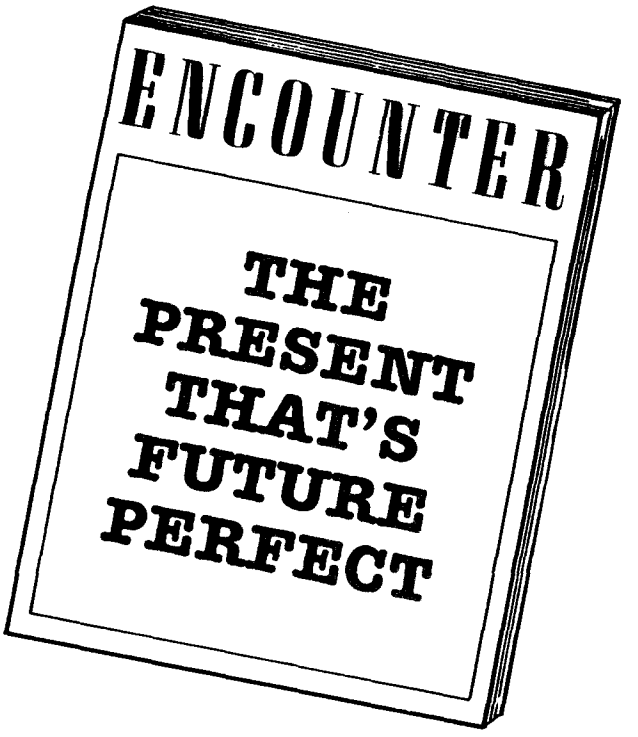


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It is worth noting, moreover, that in the course of discovering the fradulent nature of *Shabono*, "the most unsettling clue" (according to the reviewer) was the crudity of the borrowings—not factual errors in the ethnographic detail. The detection of plagiarism requires a sensitivity to literary rather than scientific criteria. Presumably, had the author shown more skill in the art of fabrication, her work (like Casteneda's) might have enjoyed for a while the status of "social science". Marvin Harris's criticism of interpretive anthropology as "mystification . . . an esoteric and nihilistic venture", the product of "essentially literary minds hostile to applying scientific methods"[4] may be relevant here. As scientific method declines, literary methods (a weak defence at best) may be all that remains as a protection against fraud.

WITH THE EMPIRICAL BASE of the discipline becoming undermined and discredited, it was inevitable that the dialecticians would move in. Inevitable, in the first place, because the affinities between the *anthropologues* and the Marxists are so close. Both share a common atavistic enthusiasm for *BC*—Before Commerce, Before Capitalism, Before Civilisation itself. The average academic Marxist, even while tippling convivially at the bar, betrays a deep unhappiness in modern industrial society, and is obviously pining for a more primitive social order than modern capitalism provides. And the *anthropologue* is no less unhappy—anthropology being, as the editor of the quarterly journal *Dialectical Anthropology*, Stanley Diamond, has so trenchantly said, "the most alienated of the professions." When both Marxists and *anthropologues* realised they had so much in common, they rushed into each other's arms. Observers foresaw a happy marriage, while wedding guests were later heard to remark that the only surprising thing was that it hadn't taken place years before.

So much for the teachers. What about the taught? The success of Marxism was inevitable, in the second place, because it is so much more emotionally satisfying for modern anthropology students than the alternatives. Playing around with the meaning of meaning and the signification-of-signs can be very tough mental work, whether you are trying to follow Wittgenstein or Lévi-Strauss. Only a few rare souls can find fulfilment in translating a corpus of primitive fables into a literary symphony—and after you've done it, what then? But the programme of the Marxist *anthropologues* requires only the mastery of a few slogans and clichés, leads straight from the lecture room into the streets, and promises not only the drama of local demonstrations but a sense of participating in world-historical upheavals in foreign lands.

Inevitable, in the third place, because for both the teachers and the taught it presented a congenially Manichaean view of the world—on one side the satanical West; on the other, the poor and oppressed. All the free-floating evangelical energy of our time could now be employed demonstrating, in course after course in the anthropological curriculum, that European expansion and colonialism

> "created the underdevelopment of the Third World [and that] a constant drain of wealth . . . has produced incredible poverty and has not only hampered but systematically destroyed indigenous economic development."

Indian poverty was created by the British, and

> ". . . we will see that it is no accident that the post-colonial governments of Africa, Asia, and modern Latin America have so often been repressive dictatorships, and that so often military régimes of right-wing generals or admirals run countries in what is often curiously called the 'free world'. . . . The stake of the United States in maintaining police states in the Third World. . . . Pinochet and the army . . . the Chilean ruling classes. . . . The Shah's police state . . . the Somosa [sic] dynasty. . . ."[5]

Etc.

SHADOWS ARE LENGTHENING across the walls of the Seminar Room. The speaker has just returned from Cameroon. In a mixture of his native Dutch and the usual Marxified jargon he talks about "ze hegemonic project of ze neo-colonial élite under conditions of capitalist penetration." His talk has been billed as a discussion of "Sorcery as Political Protest"; but after a few sketchy suggestions about revolutionary witchcraft he loses interest and has to admit that in Cameroon witches are everywhere. One feels that Nigel Barley's presence would be welcome.

A still surviving Tory slumbers fitfully. The Leninists smile encouragingly at what they hope are jests (are those, perhaps, Dutch jokes?). At question time a grey-faced woman asks anxiously about Gramsci, while a particle of dust, drifting slowly down upon her agitated head, catches the evening light. Do the sorcerers constitute a potential hegemonic bloc? The speaker fondles his oily curls, but is non-committal.

A merciful silence follows. Yes indeed, the Golden Age of Anthropology is well and truly dead.

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[4] See "Anthropology's Native Problems" by Louis A. Sass, *Harper's Magazine* (May 1986), p. 52.

[5] From Chapter 21, "The Creation of the Third World", in Roger Keesing's widely-used introductory student textbook, *Cultural Anthropology* (1981).

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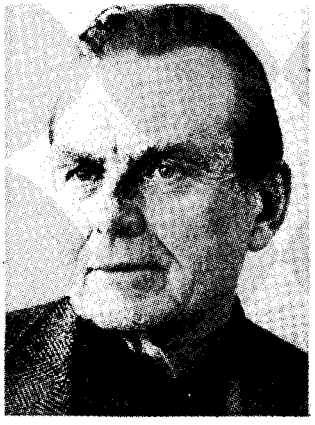
# Appreciating Milosz

## By Leopold Labedz

*[An article] . . . provoked my anger, as always happens when someone uncovers our painful secret.*
**Czeslaw Milosz,** NATIVE REALM *(1968)*

*. . . Our respect for someone's justifiable anger does not exempt us from critical objectivity.*
**Czeslaw Milosz,** THE LAND OF ULRO *(1977)*



CZESLAW Milosz's poetry, essays, and novels have been translated into many languages, but for a Nobel laureate his literary audience is not very wide. This is not, it seems, only because (as Paul Valéry said) "poetry is the thing which is lost in translation. . . ." Milosz pointed out the deeper reason in his Nobel Prize lecture. He said that a newcomer from Eastern Europe, "wherever he finds himself, notices that he is separated from his new environment by the store of his experience. . . ." There is, inevitably, a gap between Milosz's vision, images and reflections, his references and allusions, and their reception by readers with a quite different "store of experience".

In *The Land of Ulro* Milosz asked the question:

> "How to accept that what is obvious to us may not be so for others? How many ways, on how many levels, do we discover the inaccessibility of another mind? And this makes for unease: if behind the words uttered in conversation lies another perception, another wisdom, then the words, although the same, must connote something different."

In his pessimism on intercommunication—which may be realistic on a mass level, but which his own books can only undermine—Milosz is saying in effect that every national experience is an island unto itself and cannot be approached from outside:

> "I do not believe in the possibility of communing outside a shared language, a shared history. . . . One of the most serious and frustrating dilemmas resulting from prolonged residence abroad is having to repress the constantly intruding thought: How would this sound in English? How constructed by a foreign reader? I cannot stand writing in a foreign language."

In this, and in many other respects, he is obviously the opposite of Joseph Conrad (except, perhaps, in their perception of Russia, as can be seen from a comparison of *Under Western Eyes* and of Conrad's essay "Autocracy and War" with the chapter on the subject in *Native Realm*). Unlike Conrad, Milosz decided that:

> ". . . if I am to nourish the hope of writing with a free hand, with gaiety, and not under pressure, then I must proceed by keeping only a few Polish readers in mind. . . . I belong to the estate of Polish literature and to no other."

It is, of course, possible for a writer of Milosz's intellectual breadth to bridge the gap to some extent, to be understood not only by his compatriots. Indeed, while remaining rooted in his particular experience, Milosz tries after all to give it a universal significance. And in this respect it is not just his influential political book of 1953, *The Captive Mind*, which is of relevance.

The role of memory in Milosz's writings cannot be overstressed. In his words, "For me memory is mother of all the Muses." He remains "an exile", as have so many fine European writers ever since Dante; but for him memory is not just a question of nostalgia—even though, as he has remarked, the number of "Florences" has grown enormously since Dante's time.

> "The exile of a poet is today a function of a relatively recent discovery: today those in power may also control the language, not only through censorship, but by changing the meaning of words."

This Orwellian connection between the manipulation of language and the nature of the totalitarian state was the subject of *The Captive Mind* (1953), and it powerfully supplemented *1984*; for, after all, it was a non-fictional report on a really *lived* experience. Milosz recollects that "The Marxists . . . had attracted me as a young man because I sensed in them something vital and bracing." He says that for him "the Russian Revolution was personified not by Lenin, but by Vladimir Mayakovsky." With his strong Manichean predisposition, he felt an affinity with the Communists, who "were bolstered by a variant of a belief in the fundamental and hidden rationality of the historical process. . . ." Eventually, however, he obviously found that Mayakovsky (who committed suicide before Milosz exhibited enthusiasm for him) had played, after all, a less important role than Lenin in shaping Communist reality. As a writer Milosz had discovered the "socialist-realist" compulsion to pretend that this reality is not what it is.

Like so many other disappointed intellectuals, Milosz

CZESLAW MILOSZ *recently celebrated his 75th birthday. The 1980 Polish Nobel Prize-winner for Literature has been living in California since 1961 (where until his retirement he was Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Berkeley).*



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realised that the most important defence against the Communist denial of "the right to reality" is memory, both for the poet and for the people: they all need to retain their identity. Hence, the primary task of a writer is to preserve memory as the first line of resistance against the enforced falsification of words, images, and ideas. Whatever his subject, and whatever his mood, authenticity is his first duty. His individual awareness inevitably clashes with the fraudulent "truth" forced upon him by the state. The pressure is strong, and the temptation to submit great. Milosz analysed the mechanism of the intellectual rationalisation of such submission in *The Captive Mind* in a way that made it comprehensible to a Western audience at a time when very few people in the West were aware of such phenomena in any detail. He pointed out that totalitarianism is not just the sombre drama of horror and purges, that it has more humdrum but no less far-reaching consequences:

> "Terror is not, as Western intellectuals imagine, monumental; it is abject, it has a furtive glance, it destroys the fabric of human society and changes the relationships of millions of individuals into channels of blackmail. . . ."

Apart from his insight into Stalinised Poland, the other themes of Milosz's poetic memory are his youth in Wilno, the multi-ethnic town in pre-War north-eastern Poland, and his wartime experiences under the Nazi occupation in Warsaw. With the exception of some of his lyrical poems and literary essays, all his writings, in one way or another, echo these three themes. As with all his generation, the basic trauma which divides his memory is the clash between the innocence (and "normality") of his youth before the Second World War and the ensuing horrors during and after it.

As a student, Milosz belonged to a left-wing group opposing the ruling régime in pre-War Poland.[1] As a young poet, he sensed the approaching disaster (he belonged to a poetic school described as "the Catastrophists"). Under the Nazis the reality surpassed anything he may have vaguely feared in his "anti-fascist" imagination. His experiences of the Hitler occupation in Poland were shattering:

> "For a study of human madness, the history of the Vistula basin, during the time it bore the curious name of '*Government General*', makes excellent material. Yet the enormity of the crimes committed here paralyses the imagination, and this, no doubt, is why the massacres in the small Czech town of Lidice and in the small French town of Oradour are given more notice in the annals of Nazi-dominated Europe than the region where there were hundreds of Lidices and Oradours. . . ."

[1] The subsequent destiny of other members of this group is of interest. One was executed during the Occupation by the Polish Underground for helping the Soviet secret police. Two were killed by the Russians in Katyn in 1940. Two others became very prominent figures in Communist Poland after the War.

Milosz gave poetic testimony to one of these horrors in a poem entitled "Campo dei Fiori", written at the time of the liquidation by the Germans of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943. Its last stanza conveys his awe-stricken dread:

> *Those dying here, the lonely*
> *forgotten by the world,*
> *their tongue becomes for us*
> *the language of an ancient planet.*
> *Until when all is legend,*
> *and many years have passed,*
> *on a new Campo dei Fiori*
> *rage will kindle at a poet's word.*

Milosz knows only too well that certain experiences cannot be adequately transmitted through words in any language:

> "Had I been given the choice, perhaps, I would have blown the country to bits, so that the grass would no longer grow over the ashes of Treblinka and Maidanek and Auschwitz, so that the notes of a harmonica played under a gnarled pine tree would no longer float over the nightmarish pits and dunes on the city outskirts. Because there is a kind of pity that is unbearable. And so one blows it all up, at least in one's mind, that is, one is possessed by one single desire: not to look. . . ."

After the War, Milosz joined the Communist régime, less out of ideological enthusiasm for "the New Faith" than from a belief that the victory of the Soviet juggernaut was "historically inevitable". To justify this he accepted a type of philosophical rationalisation elaborated by his friend, the philosopher Tadeusz Kronski—"Tiger", whom he described in his essays as sharing the mental affliction which came to be called "being bitten by Hegel", a Polish counterpart to Schopenhauer's remark that "Whoever becomes infected by '*Hegelei und Schlaiermacherei*' will never be cured."

Tiger, who died in 1958, was his intellectual guru, and Milosz describes him with great warmth. At the same time, the retrospective apologia for Tiger helps Milosz to defend himself from accusations of simple opportunism:

> "Words cannot describe the fascination with someone's personality or an intellectual friendship. . . . When Tiger spoke of 'Christians', it was understood he meant Communists. The allegory was justified in so far as the idea of the inevitable progress or of a hidden force behind the scenes—implacable toward all who disobeyed the Teacher's commands—took its origins from Christianity: without Christianity, after all, there would have been no Hegel or Marx. The sacred merely underwent secularization, the immanent replaced the transcendent.
>
> In any case, should not the wise man have drawn conclusions from the inevitable?"

Rationalisations know no limits in history. Reflecting on the decline of the Roman Empire, the Greek poet C. P.

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Cavafy wrote about Roman citizens "waiting for the barbarians", and he concluded his poem with the line: "The barbarians were a kind of solution." Milosz also found for himself a kind of solution.

> "In the teaching of 'Ketman' practised by Mohammedan heretics in Persia (it was not unlike the Jesuit *reservatio mentalis*), a distinction was made between the goal toward which we fervently and passionately strive and the veils by which the prudent screen it from view. . . . Wear a mask, throw them off the scent—you will be forgiven if you preserve the love of Good within you."

But although Milosz realised that "there is no immanent divinity that guarantees the moral glory of what is irreversible", he still insists:

> "I was right in rejecting the light from the East, but the Communists were also right. Thanks to the Red Army, they soon seized power [in Poland] and then I had to serve them. Whoever claims that force cannot suffice as an argument overlooks the character of politics, where winner takes all. . . . From the dreams of 19th-century Socialists about a perfect society, nothing had really been salvaged. Instead, the foreground was dominated by the Hegelian conviction that certain phases will be victorious over others: that things are as they are, and we are not responsible."

Milosz did not try to make a virtue out of "historical necessity", but, as is his wont, he tried to avoid making a choice: he would not, as he loftily says, "lapse into the comfort of moral intransigency", nor did he "attach himself solely to the present by writing for the Party." His attitude was reminiscent of Joyce's maxim: "Silence, exile and cunning." As the present was both unpleasant and inevitable, the Hegelian snake-bite became for Tiger and Milosz an ideological rationale for moral as well as political impotence. Milosz reflects, however, that:

> ". . . the problem with choosing madness (a refusal to recognise necessity) and servility (an acknowledgement of our complete powerlessness) is that one act of obedience can be the start of a downward slide."

He adds that his (imagined) "freedom of manoeuvre remained intact only as long as I lived abroad behind the screen of diplomatic service." But he felt that he was "threatened with sliding because we are drawn into compromise almost without our being aware of it. . . ."

It is, to be sure, a moot point when the "sliding" begins. But although Hegel idealised the Prussian state, and the Russian writer Belinsky "made use of Hegel during a certain period of his life to deify Czardom", Milosz still thought that "History's course is not something to be discarded easily." He referred to his religious instructor, a Catholic priest at his school, as Naphta. But his guru now was Tiger, who perhaps fitted Mann's description even better.[2] According to Milosz, Tiger "had persuaded himself that in the last analysis his deceit served the truth." Milosz continued to cultivate his "dialectical" garden:

> "Immobility or resistance to historical changes that time brings with it in the name of unchangeable moral commandments and a stable structure of the universe is deserving of respect. However, those who armour themselves in this way risk punishment, because sooner or later the Spirit of History will appear, 'His face large as ten moons, a chain of freshly cut heads around his neck. . . .' I refused simply to slip out of the antinomy between the divine and the historical that was poisoning my life."

OTHER "ANTINOMIES" were also present. As a Communist diplomat he had to confront constantly the hypocrisy of living on two levels of reality. His private thoughts clashed sharply with his official duties, as he recalls in *Native Realm*:

> "At many a reception in Washington or in Paris, where enthusiastic ladies would approach a Red with a delicious shiver . . . I felt that I was only half present. . . ."

He ironically describes "those lady enthusiasts at our receptions at the Embassy, admirers of progress in the East, hens pleading for a few kernels of lying propaganda. . . . One of them gravely asked us how we intend to solve the Negro problem in our country." But at the time—the time when Orwell and Koestler were trying to dispel the illusions of the Western intelligentsia—this was not Milosz's concern.

> "I munched *hors d'oeuvres* while exchanging polite clichés with a crowd of progressive writers at various receptions, but I did not attempt to break down the wall that stood between me and them. Their warmed-over Jacobin ideas did not coincide with any reality; they were social diversions. It was not my place to enlighten them or to betray what I thought of them."

But he was very unhappy about it:

> "Standing with my glass of vodka at receptions in the Soviet Embassy, I watched how Leftist luminaires of French literature and art minced around a [Soviet] diplomat, seizing upon his every word, nodding approval—polite little boys in front of their teacher. The magic unguent of power must have rubbed off upon me too, a new arrival from the East, with my broad non-Western face, but I was ashamed of it."

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[2] Milosz writes about Tiger:

> "When the unpleasant subject of concentration camps [in the Soviet Union] cropped up in our conversation, there were always two stages in his response. First he would wither and contract: although he was splendidly informed about the millions of people behind barbed wire, he did not want to 'weaken'; that is to imagine the extent of their suffering. Then he would break into yells: he accused me of common sense (which is reactionary), of sympathy for fools. . . . It seemed as if cruelty, if it is abstract enough, strengthened his convictions: the more shadow a thing makes, the greater and the more powerful it is. But if he kept himself pumped up with the lives of the saints—Thorez's autobiography, *Le Fils du Peuple*, lay on his night table—for balance he read Arthur Koestler and Orwell's *1984*. . . ."

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After his service as a cultural attaché in the Polish Embassies in France and the USA, Milosz had eventually had enough of self-deception. In 1951 he "chose freedom". He expounded the reasons for his decision at a press conference chaired by Ignazio Silone (organised in Paris by the Congress for Cultural Freedom), and in an article, "No", published in the Polish émigré magazine *Kultura*. There he stated that a writer in the People's Democracies "has to renounce the truth completely" even though "he witnesses every day human tragedies in comparison with which the tragedies of antiquity pale into insignificance."

His decision and his explanations provoked furious attacks on him in the Polish official press (including one by the poet Antoni Slonimski, who later renounced his own opportunism and became the literary patron of the dissident opposition).[3] Polish émigrés in the West were divided. Some criticised Milosz for "belated discovery of the obvious" after supporting the Communist régime for years, and particularly for becoming its official representative; others welcomed him and demanded tolerance for a writer who had undergone "an honest disillusionment".

Milosz was clearly very wounded by these attacks and polemics (especially from émigrés) about his motives, and replied to them with acerbity. They eventually died down. He became accepted by the Poles, both inside the country and abroad, as a leading contemporary Polish poet. During the period of *Solidarity* he was officially rehabilitated, belatedly published, and even personally fêted during his visit to Poland in 1981. The workers from the Gdansk shipyard put a quotation from a Milosz poem on the monument they built for their murdered colleagues. He became, again, a target of censorship under General Jaruzelski.[4] The Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, which made Milosz (in 1986) "a corresponding member abroad", was sharply attacked in the Polish press, and Yugoslav journals were criticised for praising that reprehensible (but still unforgotten) book, *The Captive Mind*.

Milosz is an intellectual poet; also a metaphysical poet, and one of passion. Each of these elements inevitably clashes with the others, and this becomes a source of a creative tension and of certain problems for his philosophy. Poetry seems to help him clarify his feelings, but philosophy only tends to obfuscate them. While his emotions are always rather obvious, his philosophical attitudes are more often than not equivocal. He almost made the cultivation of *ambivalence* into a programmatic philosophical premise; nothing seems more painful to him than the intellectual necessity of *choice*. This is revealed in the description of his early attitudes both to Marxism and to religion. He indicates that he found it impossible to make up his mind about them:

> "Marxists dismissed their opponents by treating them en masse as 'idealists'. Although such an indictment embraced too many elements to be philosophically correct, it did contain a particle of truth. I was stretched, therefore, between two poles: the contemplation of a motionless point and the command to participate actively in history; in other words, between transcendence and becoming. I did not manage to bring these elements into unity, but I did not want to give either of them up."

The roots of the dichotomy go back to his school education where the Catholic priest and the Latin teacher presented him with opposite philosophical positions:

> "The mere presence of such a Naphta and such a Settembrini gave us an option. My rebellion against the priest weighted the scale in favour of the Latinist. But my religious crisis was not a final thing; it did not end in a clear 'yes' or 'no'. . . ."

In his writings Milosz refers very often to the wisdom of various Biblical sayings. But "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay . . ." is not one of them. He is well aware of this psychological trait. Commenting on his intellectual and political evolution, he wrote:

> "The official anti-Communism of the West was false, as is every frozen thought, but many a time its representatives closed their eyes to what they did not wish to see in my works. In that Tower of Babel, language was confounded because the levels of consciousness were different. I had to consent in advance to defeat, which is dangerous, because then we are tempted to exult in our inner readiness to accept the cross. . . . Many of my contemporaries may regard such thrashing about as the neurotic unhinging of a modern Hamlet. Their jobs and their amusements prevent them from seeing what is really at stake. I was not a philosopher. Events themselves threw me into my century's towering philosophical pressures, into the vortex of its hardest and most essential questions. Perhaps these exceeded my grasp, but they mobilised all my energies."

Milosz thinks that in his work "the song of innocence and the song of experience share a common theme." Perhaps. But one cannot help listening to the songs, noting how often he

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[3] In 1980—in his last poem, "The Trial of Don Quixote", which became his testament—Slonimski wrote:

> *Here, only yesterday, brother would send*
> *Brother to rot in jail, would humiliate and*
> *Torture him on a Procrustean bed.*
> *Then he'd put a jester's cap on his bloody head.*

[4] In 1985 the Literary Publishing House in Cracow published an anthology—*Poznawanie Milosza (Getting to Know Milosz)*, edited by Jerzy Kwiatkowski—on many aspects of Milosz's literary work, written by Polish admirers of the poet. The book, published in a limited edition, is a collection of essays most of which had appeared during the earlier period when Milosz's writings were more accessible in Poland. A review of the anthology by Joanna Gramek, in the Catholic journal *Znak* (No. 1, 1986), was heavily cut by the censors.

The planned Polish edition of Milosz's works has not so far materialised, and its chances have not increased now that he has written an introduction to the English translation of Adam Michnik's *Letters from Prison* (Translated by Maya Latynski. University of California Press, $25.00, £21.25), in which he extols this hero of Kor, *Solidarity*, and the (non-violent) resistance to the Jaruzelski régime.

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has changed his tune. In the poetic programme of his youth he exclaimed that "one does not wear short pants forever"; in Communist Poland he considered his poetry "a kind of higher politics, an unpolitical politics"; and now he says that "in poetry, I wanted to save my childhood." It is easier to see here the fortuitous continuity of a poet than the serene wisdom of a philosopher.[5]

He is particularly fascinated by the mystical and religious poets and writers: Blake and Swedenborg; Shestov and Dostoevsky; the French poet Oscar Milosz (his cousin) and Simone Weil. He has also been particularly affected by his reading of the Bible, and has even learned Hebrew in order to make a new translation of the Book of Job and the Psalms into Polish.

THE RELIGIOUS, IF NOT MYSTICAL, motifs are particularly developed in his *Land of Ulro*; the autobiographical background is described in his novel *The Issa Valley* (1955). In a recent interview for *La Stampa* (5 July 1986) Milosz explained:

> "The Lithuania of my youth is for me very much alive because the forests, the valleys and the rivers which I saw in my childhood possess for me a strong evocative force. But, as happened with Proust, childhood also for me became separated from time. If I talk in my writings about Lithuania, it is not out of nostalgia for the past, the nostalgia of an exile, but for artistic purposes, for writer's reasons. Already this landscape has become for me mixed in my memory with the landscapes of other countries I have seen since; California, and elsewhere. Thus my poems are both 'Lithuanian' and 'Californian' at the same time. . . ."

He has also declared, "A poet carries his land within him. I never left Poland."

Facing the problem of national identity presents Milosz with one of his crucifying choices. He often refers to his mixed ethnic background. His mother was of Lithuanian ancestry, and in describing her he says that she was responsible for "the tangle of contradictions I see in myself."

> "Another trait of hers was patriotism, but not toward the nation or the state—she responded rather coolly to that brand. Instead, she taught me a patriotism of 'home'; i.e., of my native province."

This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why Milosz is so attached to the realm of his youth. It also accounts for his local "patriotism".

Another person who strongly influenced him was his cousin Oscar Milosz, who faced a similar problem. He opted for Lithuania, and represented its interests at a Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Czeslaw Milosz has described his native Wilno with its ethnically mixed environment in an anthropoligical symposium,[5] in an essay which could serve as a model for a *verstehende* approach in cultural anthropology, and also reflects his ethnic dilemmas.

> "Today, if I call this city the capital of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic, Vilnius, I give a hint of my Lithuanian identify. If I call it Wilno, I present myself to the Lithuanians as probably a Pole or a Russian. Behind the double names lie the complex historical events of several centuries."

In all his other writings Milosz uses the word "Wilno". But this is hardly a reflection of Polish nationalism: he has made quite clear his hatred of the Polish "nationalist party", and particularly of the xenophobic "radical nationalists".

> "My allergy to everything that smacks of the 'national' and an almost physical disgust for people who transmit such [xenophobic] signals have weighed heavily upon my destiny."

The national strife over Wilno-Vilnius evoked in Milosz some melancholy thoughts:

> "The Poles maintained that Wilno should belong to Poland, the Lithuanians that Vilnius has always been and would be a part of Lithuania. Perhaps those sardines fighting each other in the mouth of a whale are not untypical of the relations between humans when they search for self-assertion through ethnic values magnified into absolutes."

A number of Milosz's philosophical reflections and literary essays can be read in *Emperor of the Earth: Modes of Eccentric Vision* (1977). His poetry, translated into English by himself and others, has been published in several volumes; and his autobiographical self-definition against the East European background and that of Western civilisation is most vividly expressed in his *Native Realm* and in *The Land of Ulro*. This short list of his works in English gives perhaps an idea of his range. Some of his writings in Polish are not yet available in translation, but what has appeared in English provides, I think, the Western reader with enough material to appreciate Milosz's stature as a writer and a witness for the times. He has touchingly summarised his life and work in *The Land of Ulro*:

> "In a cruel and mean century, 'catastrophism' entertained dreams of an idyllic earth where 'the hay smells of the dream', where tree, man, animal are joined in praise of the Garden's beauty. By recalling that the boy and the poet 'catastrophist' and the old professor at Berkeley are the same man, I am merely observing the guiding principle of this book, a book both childish and adult, both ethereal and earthbound. Reader, be tolerant of me."

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[5] Writing in his diary (*Fragments d'un journal*, Gallimard, 1973), Mircea Eliade reflected on 25 August 1947:

> "They tell me that . . . one has to respond, in one way or another, to the historical time one lives in. Agreed, but I would respond to it as did Buddha or Socrates: by transcending my historical time, creating a new one, or preparing it."

[6] Czeslaw Milosz, "Vilnius, Lithuania: An Ethnic Agglomerate", in *Ethnic Identity, Cultural Continuities and Change*, ed. George de Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross (Mayfield Publishing Company, Palo Alto, California, 1975), pp. 339-352.

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For all his philosophical and political peregrinations, East and West, one cannot but be impressed by Milosz's intact poetic and literary sensibility. From his "store of experience" he has vividly conveyed the meaning of contemporary tragedies and personal dilemmas.

At 75 Milosz remains as intensely puzzled by the world as when he was a child. In his novel *The Issa Valley*, he wrote that his birthplace "has the distinction of being inhabited by an unusually large number of devils", and he concluded that "there is no denying the cunning of the demons":

> "How ingenious of them to undermine the confidence of Thomas [his childhood *alter ego* in the novel] in his own internal voice, to rob him of his peace of mind by appealing to his scrupulosity. No longer could he implore God for illumination; genuflecting, he would always have the feeling he was kneeling before himself. Thomas wanted to confide in the Real, not in a cloud that, nourised by what is inside us, hangs overhead."

"Tiger" (who bestowed on Milosz "the glorious title of dialectician") argued that "evil is a test of what is *real*." This is evidently a question which does not at all bother the poet, but to which the philosopher cannot get the answer from the dialectician. That is, perhaps, why Milosz is such an elusive personality and such an open book.

# AUTHORS

**Michael Bird** (b. 1958) teaches English in a Dorset secondary school. His reviews and poems have appeared in various British magazines, and he has received regional arts grants for both poetry and fiction.

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# LETTERS

## Rusbridger's "Warning"

I HAVE been looking in your letter columns for reactions to James Rusbridger's magnificent article "Winds of Warning" (January 1986). There have, however, been quite a number of references to ENCOUNTER and to this article in the press in Holland, some of which I have seen.

This article is a very important one in the clarification of an ignored or misreported period of WW2 history, namely, on the run-up to Pearl Harbor—the decrypting of Japanese codes by Netherlands Indies Intelligence on Java; the warnings given by them to the USA on the expected attack; then the total failure of the US High Command to give credence to these decrypts or to warn the Hawaiian Defence Chiefs. In my opinion immediate positive action (as war with Japan was probably inevitable) would have meant at the most a very short Pacific War. Instead there was the loss of millions of lives on both sides, of many ships and vast quantities of materials, of misery and suffering of many children, women and men, and economic disaster to most of South-east Asia. Having served in this area I am interested to know whether you too have had any reaction. If not, I wonder why.

HOWARD BAKER

*Deal*
*Kent*

I SHARE Mr Baker's surprise that there has been so little official reaction to my article "Winds of Warning" and the revelations therein concerning the work of the joint Anglo/American code-breaking teams who (together with the expert Dutch code-breakers) were plainly reading all Japanese diplomatic and military ciphers throughout 1941 and up to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The British Foreign Secretary has now twice refused me permission to see any of the Far East Combined Bureau's archives on what one can only describe as the spurious grounds of "national security". But surviving members of FECB have, since the article was published, confirmed that they did read the all-important Japanese naval cipher—*JN25*—up to 30 November 1941, when there was a change in the additive tables that caused a few days' blackout until these could be reconstructed.

It is clear, therefore, that the messages that were sent from Tokyo to the Carrier Task Force waiting in Tankan Bay *were* read by both the British and the Americans. These instructed the Japanese Task Force to sail, and to refuel on 3 December, and stated that *X*-Day was to be 8 December. Although Pearl Harbor was not mentioned by name, this information must have been sufficient to deduce that the Japanese battle fleet was about to undertake a long journey out of home waters at a time when the intercepted diplomatic messages (*Purple*) plainly showed that negotiations were about to be broken off, and that Japanese embassies had been instructed to destroy their cipher machines and secret papers.

To this day, the US Navy will not officially admit to the existence of a Japanese naval cipher called *JN25*. The *Magic* decrypts released into the National Archives in Washington, DC, in 1980 were those prepared for the official 1945 investigation of the Pearl Harbor attack; its record fills 39 volumes of evidence. In the course of retyping these intercepts, 1945 decryption dates were added to give the impression that they had only been read retrospectively *after* the War. The original Japanese intercepts in *kana* text have not been released, and until this is done we shall not know precisely which messages were read prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

As it transpired, no mention of *JN25* was made during the investigation, so this issue has never been publicly debated. Yet it holds the key to why the attack on Pearl Harbor was allowed to take the United States by surprise.

JAMES RUSBRIDGER

*St Austell*
*Cornwall*

## On Broder's "Germans & Jews"

*By MANFORD BELMORE*

HENRYK M. BRODER is right ("Fassbinder, Germans and Jews", ENCOUNTER, March 1986). Anti-Semitism exists in Germany today not in spite of Auschwitz, but because of it. But he draws the wrong conclusion: it does *not* "serve as a constant reminder to people of their own misdeeds and failings."

On the contrary, Auschwitz is, paradoxically, the great alibi. "We didn't know *that*! And we didn't want *that*!" exclaims the German of the older generation, and thereby conveniently suppresses in his own mind what he did know, did want, and did do.

Of all the "Recent History" series Germans have been flooded with in print and on TV in the last decades, one remains to be done: "Everyday Life in the Third Reich." Nobody can now conceive this: the young do not know, and the old have repressed it. The legend, rather, is that on 30 January 1933 a lot of little brown men descended from Mars and began to practise restrictions, injustices, and cruelties on the Jews. The population disapproved of this, but, living by then under a totalitarian régime with all the paraphernalia of terror, could not do anything about it.

THE TRUTH, OF COURSE, is otherwise. Hitler worked on the anti-Semitism that was already abundantly present—it was one of the chief elements of his rise to power. And, once in power, he gave many an unhoped-for licence to do evil—a licence that was fully exploited.

People specialised in ferreting out "Jewish-looking" faces, "Jewish-sounding" names. A manager in a Karstadt department store had to keep explaining to customers that a certain salesman was *not* Jewish—he only "looked Jewish". (How he must have suffered!) Suddenly they were "entitled" not to be served by a Jew, and they exploited it. This resulted in mass dismissals, of course. The chairman of the "Friends of *Der Stürmer* Registered Association" in Hanover published a list of "shops in which we may no longer buy, persons with whom we can no longer associate"—not an isolated case. (Some readers may have to be told that *Der Stürmer*, publicly displayed in showcases, was the outlet for the obscene and demented anti-Semitic ravings of *Gauleiter* Julius Streicher—colourably the vilest publication ever produced.) In the "*Reichs-Kristallnacht*", latecomers to a plundered shop naively asked its Jewish owner whether there was "anything more" to be had: after all, this was the new form of shopping, wasn't it, sanctioned by the state?

Dr Buchinger, owner of a clinic in Bad Pyrmont, writes to a Jewish doctor in 1938 that he regrets he cannot receive his wife as a patient, not least to protect her from being insulted by the other guests. The letter is too decently phrased—"I regret the necessity for this measure as a doctor and a human being"—and he is denounced to the *Gestapo* by someone in his office.

The poisoned atmosphere is not, of course, confined to relations with the Jews. The professor now has to fear his caretaker, elevated to "*Blockwart*", who checks his mail and his visitors. Care is taken not to speak of certain things in public places. One's acquaintances are divided into "reliable" and "unreliable". The question arose, when



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involved in a legal dispute: "Is the opponent a *Pg*—a '*Parteigenosse*'?", because then he has more pull.[1] One could go on for a long time, but must not forget the 11 million Germans who voted against Hitler to the last; nor those who helped and hid Jews at immense risk to themselves.

RESISTANCE would have been possible, and quite without risk—by not doing any of the things quoted above and, say, by boycotting the first restaurants that put a "*Jews Undesirable*" notice in their windows. Even the most fanatical *SA-Mann* could not have stopped a citizen in the street and compelled him to eat in the "*Roter Ochse*".

Resistance *was* practised in the case of the euthanasia programme for the disabled. Bishop Count Galen thundered from the pulpit, and there was such unrest in the population that the scheme had to be abandoned.

The phenomenon is not confined to Germany. Day by day, the *Gestapo* in Occupied France opened some 2,000 letters of Frenchmen, denouncing each other to it. They advertised for 2,000 "informers" and got 6,000 applications. It was a French magazine that ran a competition asking for the "most effective treatment" for the Jews. A woman who suggested "sterilising them" and then "deporting them to Madagascar" won first prize (three pairs of silk stockings).

WHAT OF excuses, explanations, rationalisations? What about looting, adultery, rape during a war when there's every chance of their going unpunished? What about tax evasion? And how much indignation of the "little man" over corruption in high places is really masked regret that he cannot do likewise?

I am not suggesting that there are not millions of people who have a code of ethics and live by it. But, increasingly, our social problem is one of constraint: containment of sections of the population we have failed to socialise, in whom we have failed to inculcate indispensable values, whom we demoralise with bad housing and unemployment. Their subculture is the amusement arcade, the horror film, the football or racial riot (see, in ENCOUNTER, Jeffrey Richards, "The Hooligan Culture", November 1985).

Even in more stable strata of society, the malaise of civilisation ("*das Unbehagen in der Kultur*") is widespread. Escapes are nicotine, alcohol, tranquillisers, drugs, vicarious sport, inanities in magazines and on TV.

And there is also Nationalism (which will prevent the creation of a truly united Europe for decades yet, if not for ever). Many Germans identify themselves with the tennis champion Boris Becker—and some with the "failings and misdeeds" committed, not by themselves, but by agents of the Third Reich before they were born. How is this?

I always tell my German partners in debate that, although I was a British soldier in World War II, I do not feel responsible for the mass bombing of German cities. I was not at the elbow of Professor Lindemann, Winston Churchill, and Air Vice-Marshal Harris when they took the relevant decisions. I am, likewise, not answerable for the Boer War, and had no part in burning Joan of Arc.

Do they associate with the murderer Haarmann, who in the 1920s killed and ate a number of boys and young men in Hanover? No. Then why identify with the maltreatment of Jews when they themselves have not maltreated any and would have considerable difficulty finding one to maltreat?

". . . there is no worse social misdeed than forcing the masses to holiness", said Gustave Thibon. Very, very occasionally they are fascinated by it. This lasts a very short time. Then Savonarola is burned, and Robespierre guillotined.

"The proportion of humankind concerned to know what is 'true'—even to be in a position to bear the truth—rather than to believe what is comfortable must be infinitesimal", as Geoffrey Best wrote in your pages (ENCOUNTER, June 1985).

The average German has been goaded and baited with documentaries about the persecution and extermination of the Jews until he simply cannot take any more. That is the very strong feeling of the "silent majority". And, as Henryk Broder has noted, it is beginning to infect the "*Kulturtraeger*" as well, the makers of public opinion who should be doing better. "It" is beginning to "think in them", too.

Are we, then, forever locked in a charade, an allegory, a frieze, a Dance of Death in which it is the role of the exhorters to exhort, of the exhorted not to heed, until the next explosion of dark psychical forces of the social collective which have not been recognised and canalised in time?

What is to be done? I do not know. I have no cure for the world's ills. "You will preach the law for the masses", says the Communist turned Catholic to the "fellow-travellers" in Lionel Trilling's *Middle of the Journey:*

> "I will preach the law for the leaders. For the masses, rights and the freedom from blame. For the leaders, duties and nothing but blame, from without and from within."

It seems a gloomy recipe, and an impractical one. But I suggest: to try to overcome the widening gap between what Maurice Barrés long ago called "*le pays légal*" and "*le pays réel*"; to take a more realistic view of the amount of moral exhortation people can endure; to devise safeguards (they include prosperity and employment) which will prevent the irrational from landing themselves and us in totalitarian régimes (which it would take infinite suffering, losses, and deaths to overthrow).

Isn't such an approach to the problem more germane and urgent than compiling quotations and waxing indignant over symptoms?

MANFORD BELMORE

*Erlangen*
*West Germany*

## Letters of Robert Graves

I WRITE TO YOU about a review article on Robert Graves, published in your issue of March 1985, in which John Montague dealt with the second volume of *Selected Letters of Robert Graves*, edited by Paul O'Prey. I became aware of this tender-minded display of obsequiosity towards Graves—which closes with a reference to a "wicked remark" of his—more than a half-year after its publication. I cannot expect much space allowance for so late a retort to the falsifications involving myself that were given hospitality in Mr Montague's article, as emanating from the *sanctum sanctorum*, the Gravesian laboratory of guile and duplicity, or the Graves-promotion workshop managed by Martin Seymour-Smith, Paul O'Prey an accommodating assistant.

Also against the likelihood of its being found editorially appropriate to accept from me more than a token protest against the liberties of calumniating depiction of myself that ENCOUNTER gave Mr Montague leave to take (more than complaint of hurt feelings—no tiresome opposing of facts to all the fictions Mr Montague has gobbled up or added for table decoration) is the take-it-easy trend of contemporary literary-world custom. The take-it-easy course with all this specious Graves celebration

[1] "Collaborator", in English, took a long time to recover from Quisling and Laval; "*Parteigenosse*" never has. The SPD have called each other plain "*Genosse*" since 1863 in any case; in the CDU/CSU and the FDP, the word for a member now is "*Parteifreund*."

ED NOTE: Mrs Jackson wrote this letter during Robert Graves's long last illness, and it was held back in the light of his death in case she might wish to revise it. She informs us, however, that her views are unchanged and that she feels the letter is still pertinent.

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is to let the thing have its way, instead of, for example, prolonging the tedium by questioning the rowdy defamation of Laura Riding used for the fireworks.

Cyril Connolly put his finger on this malady in a formulation of it, for me unforgettable, he made long ago. He was reviewing a book by Douglas Day in which Robert Graves was treated of intimately by him, and myself, with the help of Robert Graves. Cyril Connolly, reviewing the book, wrote,

> "Douglas Day appears not to have consulted Laura Riding."

This is the essence of the take-it-easy author, reviewer, editor, publisher, spirit. In the case of Mr Montague's article, there was no thought of consulting me on the representations made of me therein. Yet, I have a twist to apply to the string of failures to consult me in all the Graves-promoting engaged in by Graves and attached interested parties, in the decades after the close of our association.

In the mid-sixties, Martin Seymour-Smith *did* consult Laura Riding. He was a stranger to me, but he knew *of* me, and he had busied himself over my work. He consulted me, not as to some writing of Graves in which there was to be writing on me: his concern was to detach himself from Graves, whom he had come to regard with disfavour, and occupy himself with my work, if I would cooperate in this. I was not comfortable with the proposal. He returned to the Graves attachment; resentment towards me grew, enlivening it. I have a twist to add to the "wicked remark" reference of Montague's that I cited early in this letter. Seymour-Smith in his correspondence with me used a characterisation of Graves for which I suggested "wicked" as a less intemperate, more accurate, alternative.

It would be disregardful of the extent of the distortion contained in John Montague's review for me to make a little selection of corrections to indicate that it is a very wrong and wronging piece of self-indulgent literary raconteurship. I myself have written an essay on this volume of letters that treats it as a purveyor of distortions. I plan to include this essay in my memoirs, on which I am working. I now intend to furnish as a supplement to it an adequate coverage of the many untruths embraced in John Montagues article.

LAURA (RIDING) JACKSON

*Florida*

I AM HONOURED to be the subject of a complaint from Laura Riding whose work I have admired. But despite her assertion, I have never been a member of any "Graves-promotion workshop." I know neither Martin Seymour-Smith, nor Paul O'Prey; my relationship with Robert was a private one between two poets. We corresponded and met sporadically and I was always struck by his impish—or Irish—sense of humour. That was what I meant by "wicked"; not the heavy weather Miss Riding makes of it. It must be galling, however, to find oneself a figure in someone else's legend and I do hope that Miss Riding will complete her memoirs and, with her permission, I will review that as well, and make amends, if necessary. To use her own words:

> *We must learn better*
> *What we are and are not.*

JOHN MONTAGUE

*University College*
*Cork*

## Pearce's "Gap"

AS REGARDS FRANCE, anyway, Edward Pearce is wrong in positing an "intergalactic. . . gap. . . between the US and its allies over the Libyan bombing" (ENCOUNTER, July/August).

A Gallup Poll of French adults found 59% approving of the US bombing, 35% disapproving (*L'Express*, 1 May).

Editorials in the two leading French newsweeklies supported the US action, and denounced its critics as well as the French Government's refusal of overflight rights to US planes. Claude Imbert referred to his government's refusal of over-flight rights as a symptom of the spirit of Munich (*Le Point*, 21 April). Alain Besançon deplored Europe's impotence, claimed the US intervention was abundantly justified, and called criticism of that intervention hypocritical sophism (*L'Express*, 1 May). Jean-François Revel condemned the abulic, resigned, servile attitudes of most European governments in the face of terrorism (*Le Point*, 5 May).

Finally, a number of leading French politicians—including Giscard D'Estaing, Simone Veil, and Raymond Barre—disagreed with their government's denial of over-flight rights to the US (*Le Point*, 21 April).

JOHN REHFISCH

*Berkeley*
*California*

## Hook's Marx

SIDNEY HOOK says (ENCOUNTER, May) that I have misread Karl Marx's letter in which (as Hook puts it) Marx "speculates that the proletarian revolutions in the West and the Russian revolution would 'complement' each other", and asserts that Marx "obviously refer[red] to their coordination in a world socialist economy." Hook denies that this implies Marx's theoretical endorsement of what I called "forceful expansion."

But is there a difference between "coordination in a world socialist economy" and "forceful expansion"? The ambiguity lies in "coordination". Such a thing does not happen anywhere without force. People by their own volition do not accommodate such a coordination but tend, rather, to upset the scheme (just as Marx was aware when he lamented the existence of business cycles in an exchange economy). Every socialist system requires someone's labour, or other belongings, being expropriated by another—the coordinator.

To put all this on the global stage would require even greater force than it requires in those regions of the world where it has happened domestically. When socialisation will occur in a voluntary, cooperative, non-coercive manner (outside the small community of a *Kibbutz* or an experimental commune), then the coordination Dr Hook speaks about will not require force. Then also Marx's championing of human freedom might be taken at its face value and not as a (dialectical?) misuse of the concept. Human freedom for him seems to have meant something possible only for "a new humanity" that no longer resembles anything we call human existence—with complications about good and evil, and continuous political problems.

TIBOR R. MACHAN

*Reason Foundation*
*Santa Barbara*
*California*

## Sidney Hook Replies

THE POINT at issue is trying to understand Marx's meaning, and whether the event and outcome of the Bolshevik October Revolution of 1917 can reasonably be interpreted as being encompassed in his formulations of historical materialism whose validity can be disconfirmed on other grounds.

Mr Machan's insistence that the terms "complement" and "coordinate" entail "forceful expansion" seem to me quite arbitrary. It is obvious that in the democratic welfare states of the West, even under Socialist Party régimes, "coordinated" and "complementary" functioning of the private and public sectors of the economy go on without necessarily involving "forceful expansion".

SIDNEY HOOK

*Hoover Institution*
*Stanford, California*

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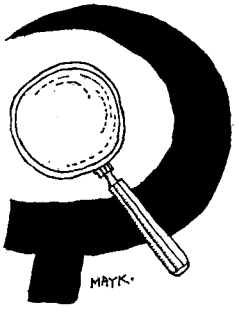
# Life & Letters Today

*Moscow*




CIAO, TOVARICH: *Articles frequently appear in the Soviet press inveighing against the contamination of Russian by foreign words [Serge Schemann reports].*

*Notwithstanding the resistance of the purists. Russian, with its rich array of prefixes and suffixes, is capable of absorbing foreign roots by the bushel. The same critic who invokes Lermontov's name may not know that it derives from Lairmont, a Scottish soldier of fortune who found his way to Russia.*

*In fact, some of the most colorful words in Russian derive their zing precisely from the fact that they come from abroad.*

*Take* **sharamyzhnik.** *It implies someone who habitually cadges drinks from his buddies. The delightful source of the word is in the French* **cher ami.** *Russian soldiers who chased Napoleon's armies back to France in 1812 apparently picked up the expression from Frenchmen looking for a smoke or a drink, and adapted it to their own use.*

*Russians like to claim that the trade was two-way, and that the French* **bistro** *came from the Russian* **bystro** *(quickly), the word shouted by the Russian occupiers at their French waiters.*

*In our time, English has become the main source of Soviet slang. To the dismay of ideologists and linguists alike, it is more tony to let drop* **shuz** *(for shoes) or* **uikend** *(for weekend). Among the most outrageous borrowings is* **khailaifist.** *It is literally "high-life-ist", and it refers to someone fully equipped with* **dzhinzy, shuzy, diski** *(records) and* **videokasety.**

*NEW YORK TIMES*

*London*

INFERNAL: *We wrote in the "Mail" last week:*

**"Abandon hope all ye who enter here. That was the warning to those approaching Dante's Inferno."**

*Now Bernard Levin writes us a letter:*

**"No, it wozzn't. As President of the International Federation of Misquotation-Rebukers, I have to issue the Daily Mail with the Federation's Tarnished Star, Grade Three.**

**'*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che entrate*', means: '*All hope abandon, ye who enter here*'; all governs the hope, not the enterers."**

*DAILY MAIL*

*The Hague*

FULL PICTURE: *Successive chairmen of Shell Transport and Trading have inherited a painting, which hangs outside the chairman's office in London's Shell Centre, depicting the Dutch on the Medway in 1667.*

*It is a fine painting by Jacob Bellevois—but, unhappily, it shows all the English ships being sunk.*

*In the interests of maintaining a well-balanced relationship with his Dutch colleagues, the chairman of Shell Transport has commissioned a splendid painting of the Battle of Terschelling in 1666, in which the English fleet destroyed a large Dutch fleet.*

*But the painting by John Groves, showing the Dutch fleet being consumed by fire, will hang, in future, outside the office of the President of Royal Dutch in The Hague.*

*FINANCIAL TIMES*

*Moscow*

Q. & A.: *Violent rumblings represent the tip of an iceberg of popular discontent with Gorbachev's policies against both corruption and alcoholism [Louise Branson writes].*

*A new anecdote sums up the ominous mood.*

**Ivan Ivanovich flies into a rage after waiting for four hours in a vodka queue and still being nowhere near the front. He takes a knife out of his pocket and announces that he is going to the Kremlin to kill Gorbachev in revenge.**

**But within half an hour he is back.**

**"Why did you return so quickly—what happened?" his queue companions ask.**

**"Oh", Ivan Ivanovich replies as he reclaims his place, "the queue at the Kremlin was much longer."**

*SUNDAY TIMES*

*London*

FRINGE BENEFITS: *They start young in Islington. The Council, together with the Inner London Education Authority, is advertising for an*

**Advisor on Under Fives (Anti-Racist Strategies)**

*The salary: between £11,000 and £12,000.*

*In neighbouring Camden, meanwhile, the Council confesses that the needs of its homosexual residents are not being met "by the services we provide" and is advertising for two temporary project workers (salary £12,000-£13,000) to "identify the needs of lesbians and gay men."*

*"I can't tell you what their needs are", said a Council spokesman, "but one does hear they're having problems."*

*THE TIMES*

*London*

DESCENT OF MAN: **According to the Haringey Education Bulletin "it has been decided that, in the light of sexist connotations, the words 'undermanning bonus' are to be substituted forthwith by 'understaffing bonus'."**

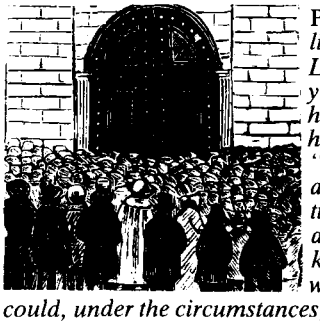
**The Bulletin continues:**

**"Heads, caretakers and kitchen supervisors in particular are asked to ensure that all appropriate members of their staff get to know of the change and that undermanning is not used in correspondence.**

**For the same reasons, we are looking for a substitute for 'handyman bonus' and would welcome suggestions."**

*DAILY TELEGRAPH*

*London*



PROPER ADDRESS: *The Polish Academy of Literature in London has awarded this year's prize to the Warsaw historian Adam Michnik for his book on the history of "Honour in Poland". At the award ceremony the "Laudatio" was given by the novelist and critic Tadeusz Novakowski. The telegram which was sent on the occasion could, under the circumstances, only be addressed:*

**Adam Michnik,**
**Warsaw (Mokotov Prison)**

*FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG*

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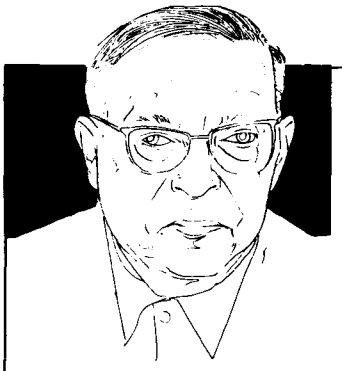


# *"What a business! Dear oh! dear, what a business!"*

So wrote Jean-Paul Sartre to Simone de Beauvoir in October 1959. He was referring to his dealings with John Huston over the scenario for a film on Freud that Huston had asked him to write. Sartre became passionately involved with the project. The first scenario was too long, and when Huston asked for cuts he got, instead, a still longer version. Although a film was ultimately made, Sartre's name did not appear among the writers' credits—at his request.

Recently discovered among Sartre's papers, *The Freud Scenario* can be judged as part of his overall achievement; there are echoes of it in *The Prisoners of Altona, The Idiot,* and *Words.* It also stands alone as a powerful drama and as evidence that Sartre could, when he wanted to, master the popular touch.

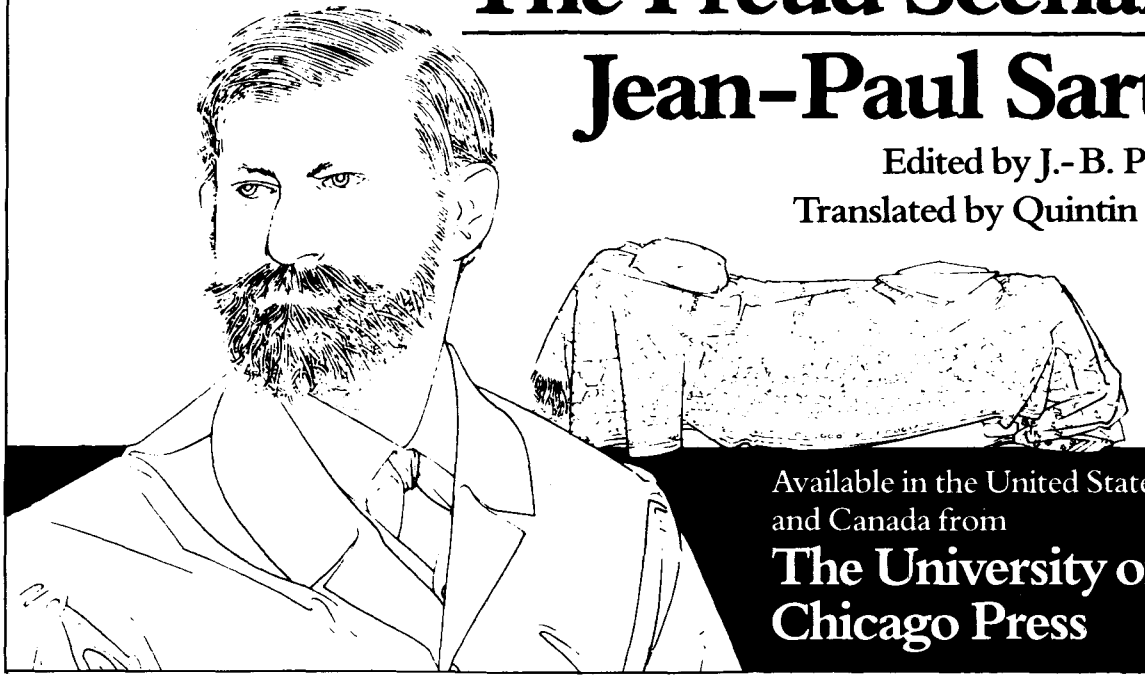
This first English translation presents Version I in its entirety, with salient selections from Version II, and Sartre's 1958 synopsis.

**"It is difficult to believe that Sartre wrote anything better than this scenario... Should there be a composer out there looking for a stunning libretto, this one almost sings itself off the page."**—A.C. Danto, *Times Literary Supplement.*
**"Extraordinarily good to read."**—John Sturrock, *New York Times Book Review.*
**"Brilliantly entertaining and provocative..."**—Susan Monsky, *Boston Globe.*

# The Freud Scenario

## Jean-Paul Sartre

Edited by J.-B. Pontalis
Translated by Quintin Hoare



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